



ESSAY
ON
HONOUR
—
HILDROP



ELIZABETH
TOWN, 1791







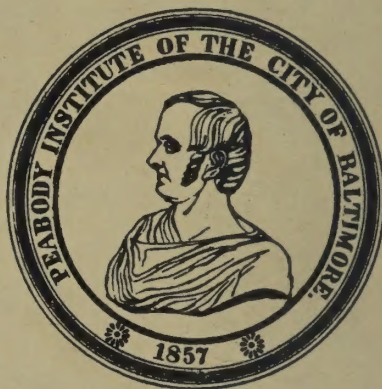
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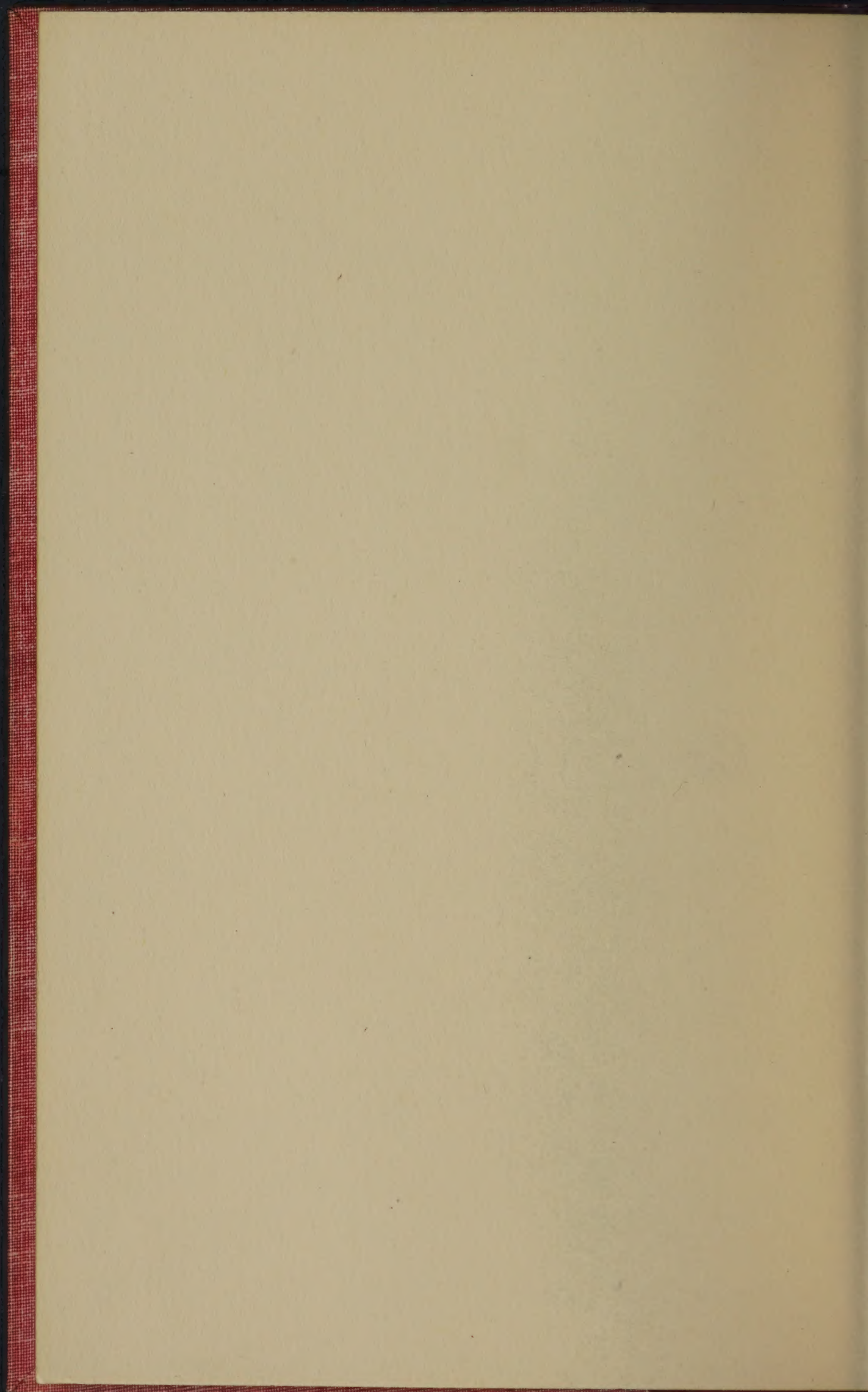
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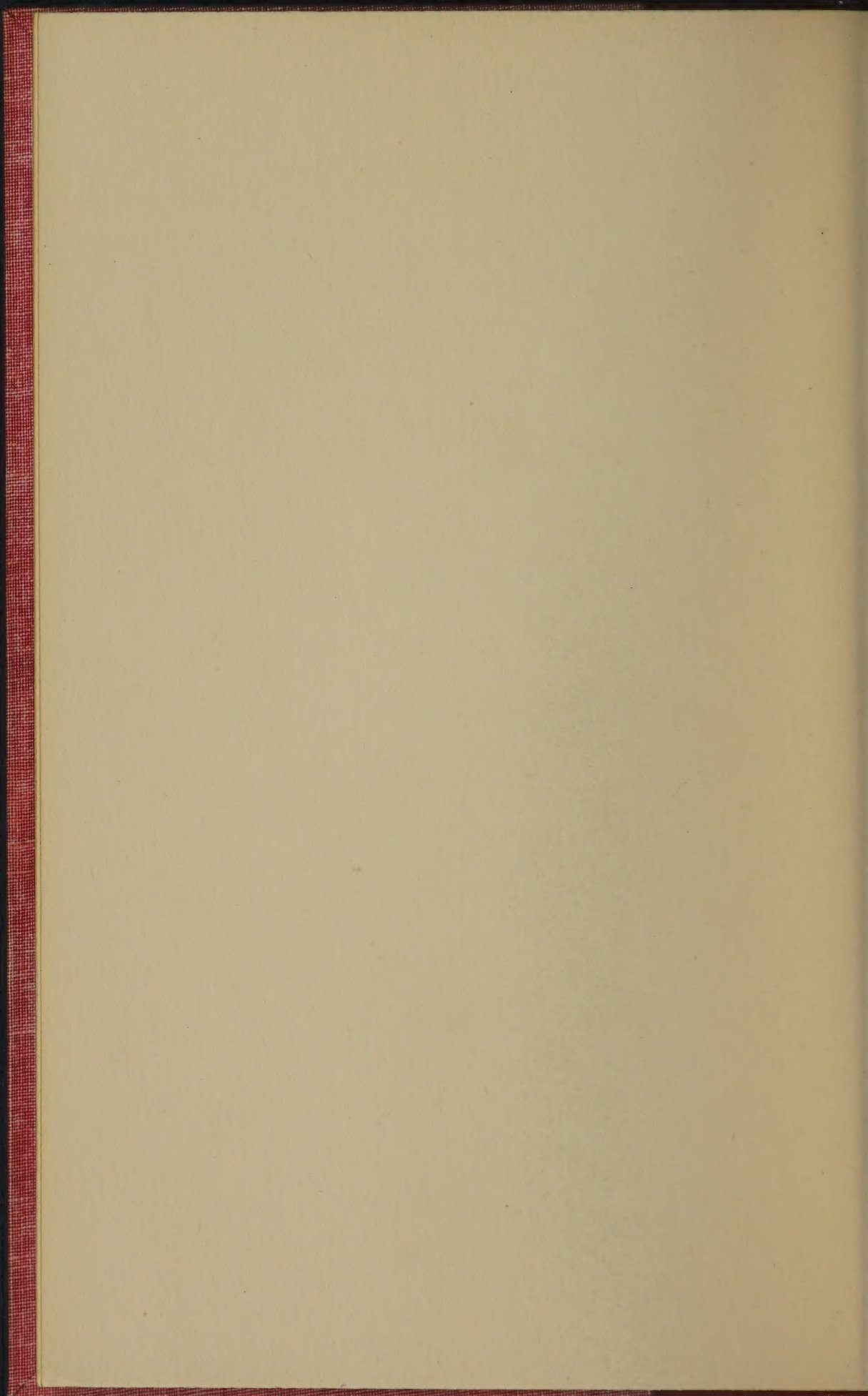
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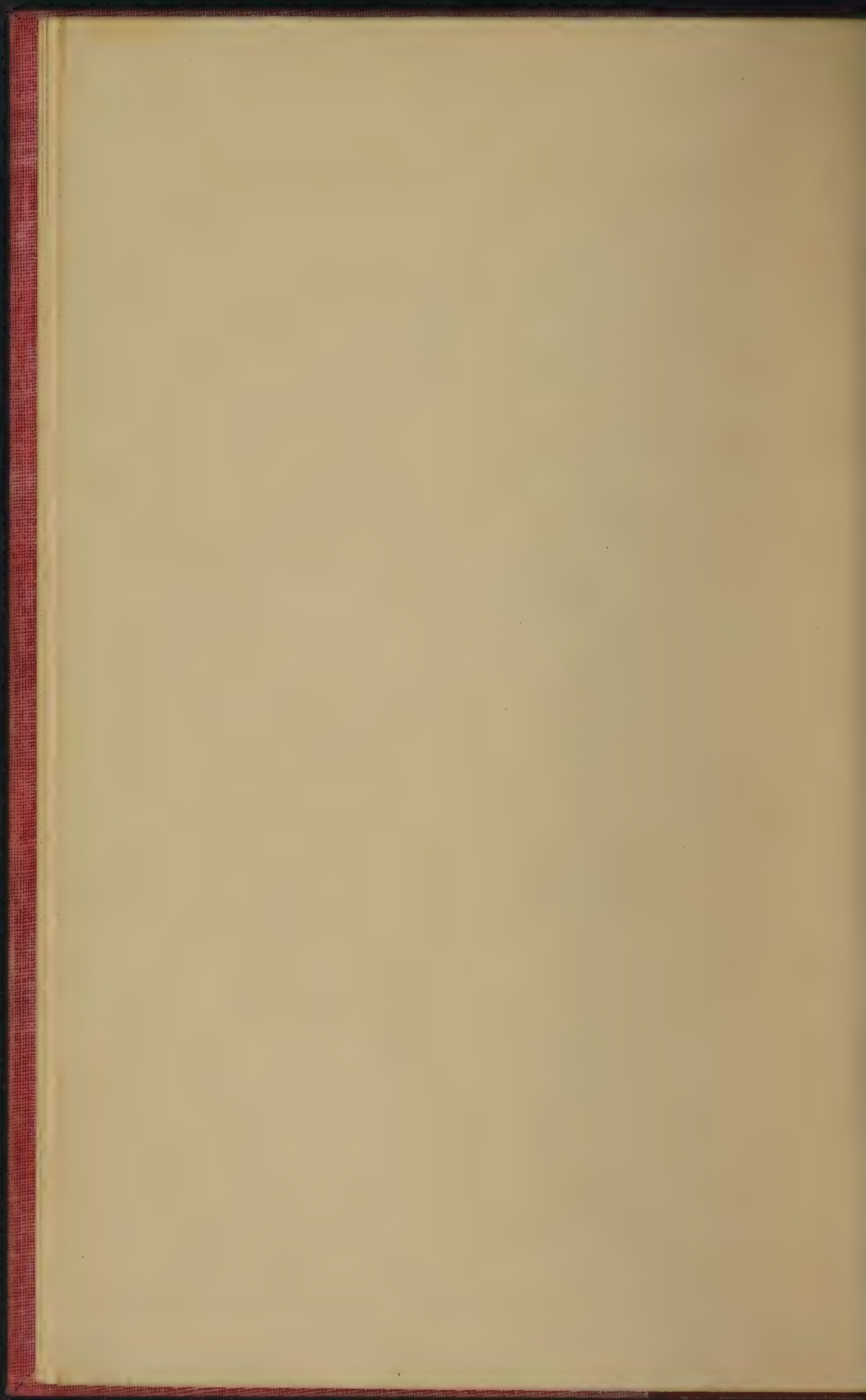
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JOHN HILDROP, D. D.

Rector of Wath, in Yorkshire, England.

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ELIZABETH-TOWN, MARYLAND,

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To the Patrons of the Work.

SETTING aside the idea of a laboured Preface, I have reprinted the following Letters in this Form, hoping that it may be the Means of further spreading the Knowledge, and increasing the Influence of them.

An Essay on *Honour* cannot fail of raising the Curiosity of some of the Wealthy, the Noble, and the Ambitious, who are the forwardest to lay claim to the Character of a Man of Honor.

In an Age, when the American Nation is rising in Greatness and Respectability, with such gigantic Strides, nothing could be more seasonable, than the Impression, that Virtue is the High-road to Preferment, and that Vice, though gilded with Titles and shielded with Wealth, is still contemptible.

The many Appointments to Office, made by our Excellent President, being universally approved, at once evince, that Merit alone, and not Courtly-cringes, is the Recommendation which succeeds with him.

This work, having been wrote in England, and printed there in the Weekly Miscellany, has now undergone a few trifling alterations, owing to local circumstances; but, in no instance has the Author's meaning been changed or affected.

With the greatest deference to his Patrons,
The Editor subscribes himself,
Their devoted servant,

Stewart Herbert.



A N

ESSAY ON HONOUR.

LETTER I.

IN a late letter I took notice of a dangerous evil, arising from a misapplication of names and confusion of characters, and particularly with regard to those wrong-headed gentlemen who are the great pretenders to *Free-thinking*. I shall now consider another species of ambiguities, commonly called *Men of Honour*; to which all men make pretensions, and to which not one in a thousand has a real title. I shall endeavour to explain the true meaning of the words, and rescue them from the abuses of common speech, from whence it will evidently appear who are really and truly *Men of Honour*, and who they are that vainly assume the title, without any real foundation of claim to support it. Mr. *Addison* has long ago observed in one of his *Tatlers*, that in modern estimation, the single point of honour was courage in men and chastity in women. Whence it comes to pass, that every man who dares to send, or accept a challenge, and every pretty female that dares to refuse one, have an indisputable title to *Honour*: And he that has religion and good sense enough to refuse a challenge, is in danger of being kicked out of the fashionable world for a scoundrel and a coward; and every woman who has once been so unhappy as to offend in point of chastity, cannot by the most sincere repentance,

penance, by all the merciful abatements that ought to be made for human frailty, and a thousand amiable qualities besides, thrown into the balance, be ever able to wipe off an indelible mark of infamy fixed upon her by all the ill-natured prudes and coquets about town.

I have often thought that from these false notions one might account for numberless absurdities in common life, of which I shall only mention two or three. There is many a man, who, if you were to charge him with blasphemy, adultery, fornication, or drunkenness, would hear it with patience at least, if not with pleasure, and might perhaps have the preposterous vanity of affecting to be thought more wicked than he really was; but if you were to give that man the lye, he would take fire at once, and nothing but blood should give him satisfaction. Now whence can this proceed, but from an opinion that a lye is a certain mark of cowardice, that none but an abject scoundrel could be guilty of a thing that he would be ashamed to own, and that lying was the most infamous sneaking vice that could infect the heart or tongue of man.

Hence also proceeds the common mistaken notions of *Posts of Honour*, by which is commonly understood no more than certain posts or offices to which precedence with titles and badges of honour, are usually affixed, without any consideration of the merit of the persons, the nature of the service, the means by which they were obtained, and the uses that are made of them. When the honour and service of their prince and country are the only views aimed at in erecting and filling these posts, when they are freely bestowed as the re-
wards

wards of superior merit, and are executed with fidelity and courage, they are then really and truly *Posts of Honour*; but if they be only erected upon private, personal, and corrupt views, purchased by the best bidder, or bestowed as the inglorious rewards of venality and prostitution, and executed with all the low cunning of a stockjobber, or a jockey.—In all such cases, as Mr. Addison finely expresses it, *the Post of Honour is the private station.*

But the most absurd abuse of the word, is, *Debts of Honour*; by which are usually understood only such debts as are contracted by *play, or wagers*, whether at the quadrille table, or *New-market*. Lady TOWNLY is scrupulously punctual in discharging her *play debts*; but has no patience to pay her money to a pack of slovenly dirty *tradesmen*, who, for several years, have had the *Honour* to provide food and raiment for her ladyship and her family; which, if the rascals had either manners, or conscience, they would think a sufficient reward for all the time and expence they could possibly employ in such an *honourable* service.

To rectify these, and many other prevailing mistakes upon this head, I shall endeavour to throw together a few occasional thoughts concerning the true notion of *Honour*, in opposition to the popular prejudices and mistakes about it, with the true uses and abuses of both.

True *Honour* is seated in the *Soul*. It is a kind of *fons perennis*, rising from a generous heart, and flowing with a natural and easy descent into all the different traces of life and channels of duty, refreshing, invigorating, and adorning all the faculties of the soul, the language of the tongue, the very air of the face, and motions of the body. It displays

displays itself in a natural unaffected greatness and firmness of mind, improved by a train of wise and religious reflections, and generous actions, in which personal virtue and real merit truly consist. The *Jewish Cabbalists* had a pretty allegory to express this truth as founded in the original make and frame of nature. They tell us, that when *Moses* describes the great river of *Eden*, branching out into four streams, and watering the whole garden of God, *Gen. ii. 10.* we are to understand by *Paradise* the soul of man. The river was this *connata virtus*, this original fountain of truth and virtue, arising from the very root and essence of the soul, and branching out into the four cardinal virtues, and all the other lower degrees and kinds of virtue, even the *inferior morals* of affability, politeness, good-nature, and good-manners; that in short there lies hid in the root of every human soul, however defaced by ignorance, and deformed by sin, a fund of good, an oracle of truth; which, when assisted by a happy concurrence of external causes, such as particularly the structure of the organs, and the texture of the blood and spirits, will, by due culture and discipline, naturally exert itself in a train of great, generous, and beneficent actions, suitable to the original grandeur and dignity of its nature. This is what *Virgil*, in his *Pythagoric* stile, calls the *Ignæus Vigor & Cælestis Origo* of the human soul. This, in the present ruinous state of human nature, lies very often buried under the ruins of ignorance and vice, like valuable coins, medals, statues, pillars, and other beautiful ornaments of architecture; or to speak more properly, that order, symmetry, and proportion, which were as the soul of the structure,

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lie buried under the ruins of a once famous and magnificent building. Hence it comes to pass, that many an excellent genius is lost to the world, lies hid among the rubbish of mankind, who, with proper assistance, due culture, and in a happy situation, might have done honour to human nature, and been a public blessing to mankind.---*A Man of Honour*, considered in this light, performs not only all the acts of virtue in public and private life, but does them with a peculiar propriety and dignity of behaviour, as the *connoisseurs* in writing, music, painting, architecture, or even dress, execute even the justest designs, not only with proportion and truth, but with such decorations, embellishments, and graces, as naturally flow from a fine taste, and an improved understanding. This alone, in *high life*, makes *glorious princes illustrious heroes, gallant commanders, vigilant magistrates, and honourable counsellors*; and, in the lower degree of social life, indulgent husbands, tender fathers, affectionate friends, merciful landlords and masters, faithful tenants and servants, and executes all the relative duties of life with justice and honour. This is the true honour and real virtue, the only proper foundation of all the honourable distinctions among men in all the different stations of life, and it was a just and wise observation of the poet*.

Nobilitas sola est atque unica Virtus.

This is *true Honour*, which the greatest Princes upon earth can neither give nor take away.

* See a most excellent *Treatise upon true Greatness* by *M^r. Rollin*, in one of his *Volumes upon the Study of the Belles Lettres*.

Men

Men that have approved themselves thus eminently and illustriously good, have, in all ages and countries been distinguished, by wise Princes and Governors, by certain honorable titles and ensigns of dignity, expressive of their particular merit, as might at once attract and command the reverence of inferiors, and encourage others to excel. And this has produced a secondary and improper sense of the word *Honour*, which by a fatal abuse of language has almost swallowed up the other, and is too often substituted in its room, meaning no more than the honorable rewards and titles usually bestowed upon persons of superior virtue. How it has happened that these honorable titles have, in many cases, been made hereditary, and entailed not only on the direct line, but even the collateral branches of the family, is not easily accounted for. If it were upon a presumption that a wise and good man could entail his moral and intellectual accomplishments, as well as his estate and titles, upon the heirs of his body lawfully begotten, it was a very great compliment to the merit of the father, as well as to the virtue of the mother; and it would be quite a right institution, that a race of virtuous and honorable descendants should enjoy all the honors and privileges conferred upon their virtuous and honorable progenitors. Were a man unexperienced in human nature and the frequent instances of degeneracy that abound in it, were he only to consider the general course of nature in the animal and vegetable worlds, he might be tempted to conclude, that as all animals and vegetables produce their like with very little variety and deviation, but what arises from external and accidental causes, man also, the most perfect creature

creature, the head and Lord of the mundane system, should do the same; and that the Poet argued very philosophically, as well as politely, when he said.

*Fortes Creantur fortibus & bonis.
Est in juvenis, est in equis Patrum
Virtus, nec imbellem feroces
Progenerant aquila columbam.*

This was, indeed, a very pretty compliment from a well bred man to a potent Emperor, and a generous Patron, but has more in it of the good Courtier than the good Philosopher. For sad experience shews us the contrary; the best and wisest man upon earth has no security whether his heir shall be a wise man or a fool, a good man or a rake, a patriot or a pensioner, a hero or a sot. Many a flourishing tree in the Herald's Office has produced some such sorry sticks of wood as could be reduced to no form or use, or admit of any polish. It should seem therefore to be giving too much credit to the virtue of the present possessor to entail such degrees of wealth and honour upon his posterity, as to enable them, if they prove vicious, to do as much mischief to the world in time to come, as he had done good in time past. This is an entail of such a nature, that no demerit, except high-treason against the sovereign, can ever cut it off from the most unworthy descendants. Why should it not also extend with as much justice to their estates and fortunes, so as to secure them from ever being wasted, or diminished by profusion and extravagance, in bar to all the legal demands of the honest and industrious creditors? It must

must be owned that this is sometimes the case, as it was thought a proper precaution to secure a competent provision of fortune to attend the honours of the family, but with how much justice to the public, upon a thorough and circumstantial survey of the case, let any man judge. I wish it could be said with any appearance of truth, that this is an invidious and impossible supposition, and that the stream of honour never could be debased by passing through polluted channels; that the legitimate descendants of noble ancestors never could *iralignate from their kind* (as Mr. Dryden expresses it): But that such instances really have happened where neither the natural nor intellectual abilities of the father nor the virtue of the mother, have ever been called in question, will, I think, require no proof. And whenever this happens to be the case, it would be a wise and useful institution to erect another *Court of Honours*, another *bench of judges*, who, like the *censors* in ancient *Greece* and *Rome*, and the most celebrated *eastern* nations, should have power to strip the worthless bearer of such honourable distinctions as are a reproach to his demerit, and suspend or divert the entail till a proper person of the same blood could be found, who, in the judgment of the court, might be thought worthy to wear them.

LETTER II.

I Believe it would be hard to produce any one order of knighthood in christian countries, who are not bound by the statutes of their respective foundations,

foundations, principally, and among other articles, to defend God's holy religion, the immunities of the church, and the liberties of their country, as well as the honour of their sovereign; to protect widows and orphans, to assist the distressed, and to rescue the helpless from violence and wrong, and to exert all other acts of heroic and military virtue; and that a default in either of these, to which they solemnly bound themselves by their installation oath, should subject them to the infamous penalties enjoined by the rules of their order, such as particularly with us, to have *their arms reversed, their swords broke, and their spurs hack'd off by the master-cook of the king's kitchen*: Which I believe no man elected into those illustrious bodies would, at the time of election, think to be an unreasonable punishment, however he may alter his opinion afterwards, for sundry and special reasons him thereunto moving. Now, I say, if a train of virtuous and meritorious actions, which alone could intitle a man to those honours, could not be able to protect him from the infamy due to his afterdemerit, it seems to be a peculiar kind of indulgence to the worthless descendants of honorable ancestors who subsist purely upon the original stock of family merit, (which they have been so far from improving that they have done nothing to support it) should yet upon that single consideration, be screened from the infamy due to their own personal demerit.

That *personal merit* is the sole foundation of honour is always confessed by those that bestow them, and whatever secret services, or peculiar kinds of merit were the real ground of their promotion, yet forms and appearances must still be kept up, all the public and private virtues that can dignify and ennoble human nature are recited in the body of the patent,

patent, as the only meritorious demand upon the royal fountain of honour. This, at once, purges, as the grave buries, all the natural and moral defects of the bearer; and the encomiums in the *patent* and the *epitaph* are generally in truth and substance much the same. If it should ever happen under a weak or wicked prince, or a corrupt minister, (for such there have been, and may be again in the world,) that the only successful recommendation to both should be a servile shameless compliance with the vices and follies of a court, or being thoroughly dipped in all the dirty schemes of avarice and ambition; if a person who had no other kind or degree of merit but an absolute submission to their commands, or a dexterous execution of their most infamous designs, should be rewarded with a patent, what a glorious catalogue of sublime virtues, consummate abilities, and heroic actions would be crowded together to fill it up, and stuff out the solemn farce of titular greatness, to illustrate the reason of the grant, the merit of the receiver, and justice and favour of the giver? Such the satyrist tells us was once the state of merit and reward in ancient *Rome*.

Ille crucem sceleris pretium tulit, hic Diadema.

The same villany that raised one rogue to a gibbet, raised another to a throne. It must indeed be allowed that this was in a *heathen* country, and can never be suspected to happen in a *christian* nation; but if it should be possible for christians to turn heathens, as heathens have turned christians, the same thing might perhaps happen again; and in such a case, all the titles, coronets, and ribbands in the universe

verse could no more cure the moral defects of such a character than they could a wry neck, a hump back, a leprous skin, or a rotten constitution, though perhaps it might answer all the popular notions and purposes of honour, more than the integrity of a saint, or the knowledge of an angel. The bulk of mankind, *qui stupet in titulis & imaginibus*, are caught by noise and shew. The pompous sound of titles and glitter ornaments strike their senses, attract their attention, raise their admiration, and extort from them all that reverence and regard, that are due only to eminent and distinguished merit; while real virtue and true honour pass silently through the world, unheeded and unrewarded, but by the happy discerning few, who are sensible of its merit, or enjoy the blessed communications of its influence.

When the glorious spirits, whom providence has appointed to be our guardians and protectors in this present state of imperfection and probation, survey the disordered state of human nature, agitated by blind passions, prejudiced by false opinions, into erroneous conclusions and wild pursuits, they view us with the same light, and with the same emotions of compassion and charity, as *Monroe* did his lunatic patients in *bedlam*, who mis- cal and misapply almost every instance in which their duty and happiness is concerned. To those blessed intelligences the silent life of a generous, compassionate, beneficent man is more truly honourable, than the pageantry of princes, the pomp of conquerors, and all the glorious impertinence of state. To them an obscure good man, doing secret acts of charity, relieving the distressed, comforting the miserable, and approving himself by

habits

habits of piety and devotion to the great author of his being, appears more truly glorious than the conqueror at the head of an hundred thousand men. To them the *Man of Ross* appears in a fairer light in the *book of remembrance*, and will make a much more illustrious figure at the last great day than *Alexander* or *Cesar*, or *William the Conqueror*, though a *christian*. For my own part, when I consider the bulk of military heroes, the conquerors of nations who stand foremost in the lists of fame, I esteem them no better than so many *glorious robbers*, and *illustrious plunderers*, born to be the scourges and plagues of mankind, whose memory descends to posterity in no better light than the ravage of a pestilence, the sweep of an inundation, the burst of an earthquake, or the fury of a conflagration; something magnificently dreadful, something very astonishing, but very shocking, full of terror and big with destruction: but to do good, to be lovers of mankind, to alleviate the distresses, and promote the peace and happiness of our fellow creatures, is the highest honour, the noblest ambition, that can enter into the heart of man. But the bulk of mankind judge quite otherwise. Noise and shew, title and equipage, glitter and grandeur constitute the whole idea of honour; and whoever can command an interest sufficient to procure, and an affluence sufficient to support them, becomes thereby not only a *Man of Honour*, but even a subordinate *Fountain of Honour*, enabled to produce others after his kind, and propagate the honourable species from generation to generation,

From what has been said, there appears to be a real and necessary distinction betwixt a *Man of Honour*,

when the humble fit comes upon him, he will crack jokes with his footmen, get drunk with a hackney coachman, and bestow his bodily favours upon any pretty cleanly female, without inquiring into her quality; but he never forgets to resume his superiority, whenever he is conversing with a man of real merit, who cannot reckon so many honourable grandfathers as himself. I had once the honour to meet this extraordinary person among other company at a gentleman's table, who was the delight of his friends, a blessing to his neighbourhood, and an ornament to his country. In the course of conversation, honourable mention was made of a late noble lord, who, by a train of meritorious services to his prince and country, had raised himself from an obscure birth and fortune to the dignity of a peerage. *Clodius* took fire at once, all his illustrious blood boiled with indignation, and he insulted his memory with all those expressions of scorn and contempt, which *fools of distinction* usually pour out upon their betters. My friend had patience to hear his string of abusive stories, and scurrilous reflections, and then replied, sir, says he, lord **** was my friend, and had he been living, you durst not have used him at this rate; and to attack his memory with reproachful language is mean and ungenerous, and which I cannot help resenting. The very reflections you have made upon the obscurity of his birth and fortune, are the highest compliment you can make to his personal merit, which in spite of those disadvantages, could so effectually recommend him to the favour of his king and country. The advantages of birth and fortune, on which you set so immoderate a value

value, are no man's merit, and are as often the lot of a fool as of a wise man; and whenever that is the case, they are so far from doing him honour, that they only serve to make him more egregiously ridiculous, by setting his folly in a more conspicuous point of view. If *poor Tray* could speak (pointing to a spaniel that stood by him) he might justly boast of a more numerous train of ancestors than the greatest monarch in the universe; he might add too, that none of them had ever degenerated from the dignity of their kind, or disgraced themselves or their family by base and unworthy actions, and yet *he would be but a puppy for all that*. Pray, sir, give me leave to ask you (what you will think) an odd question, what do you think of *me*? of you, sir, quoth the oaf! you are esteemed by all that know you to be as worthy a gentleman as any in our country. Sir (said he) I thank you for the compliment, and in return I will let you into a secret. My birth was as obscure, and my fortune as mean as that noble lord's whom you have been reproaching upon that account. I was born to no more than the meanest of my servants, but by God's blessing on a religious education, and honest heart, and a tolerable understanding, you see I am enabled to support a decent figure, and do a great deal of good, which I do with the utmost gratitude to Almighty God, who has enabled me to do it, and the sincerest benevolence to my fellow creatures who are so unhappy as to want it: and I have vanity enough to think myself no whit inferior to any man, of what rank or quality soever, who has nothing but an estate and a title to recommend him.

Honour, and a *Person of Honour*, which, notwithstanding the similitude of sounds, and the seeming affinity of characters, are so far from being convertible terms, that they convey quite distinct ideas, and are very often as different as light from darkness. The *man* of honour is an internal, the *person* of honour an external, the one a real, the other a fictitious character. The words *person* and *persona* are generally viewed in that light. No body imagines that the *Dramatis Personæ* are real characters, but borrowed representations of princes or peasants, heroes or lovers, harlequins or philosophers. I am therefore never surprised to see or hear such things attempted, said, or done, by a *Person* of Honour, which a *Man* of Honour would blush to think of. Would you see this opposition of characters, set in a true beautiful light, please to read the famous speech of *Caïus Marius* (recorded by *Sallust*) to the *Roman* people upon his being chosen commander in chief in the expedition against *Jugurtha*.

A *Person* of Honour may be a profane irreligious libertine, a penurious, proud, revengeful coward, may insult his inferiors, oppress his tenants and servants, debauch his neighbours wives or daughters, defraud his creditors, and prostitute his public faith for a protection, may associate with sots and drunkards, sharpers, and gamesters, in order to encrease his fortune: I say, it is not impossible that a *Person* of Honour may be guilty of all these; but it is absolutely impossible for a *Man* of Honour to be guilty of either.

*Lucilius is a Man of Honour, though not----
Stuck o'er with Titles, nor hung round with strings.*

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His estate honourably raised by his virtuous ancestors, and improved by himself, is sufficient to support a handsome figure, which he does with a decent frugality; and to do a great deal of good, which he does with cheerfulness, generosity, and prudence. In all his commerce with mankind, in every article of public or private life, he exerts a peculiar dignity of behaviour, such as naturally flows from a generous heart softened by humanity, elevated by religion, and directed by prudence; conscious of none but virtuous designs, and honourable intentions. In him you see the sincere christian, the loyal subject, the firm patriot, the indulgent husband, the tender father, the faithful friend, the merciful landlord, the compassionate master, the generous patron, the unwearied advocate for the poor, the miserable, and helpless; and in a word the compleat *fine gentleman*. He passes through all the various scenes of life like a river flowing with blessings, conveying beauty, riches, and plenty into every channel and country through which it passes.

Clodius is a person of honour, a scrubby branch of an antient and honourable stock, which for many years has borne neither fruit nor blossom, but projected a noxious baneful shade around it, where the sun beams never enter to cheer the earth, or produce either food or flower for man or beast. *Clodius* bears himself high upon account of his honourable birth and title, and never fails to exert an awkward ridiculous superiority whenever he falls in company with wiser or better men than himself. But he has heard that humility is a certain token of good sense and true honour, which he is resolved to shew upon proper occasions, and
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civil government. *These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also, and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus, v. 7.* But the Bereans acted at a quite different rate, they heard with patience, and examined without prejudice, the nature and design of the Apostles doctrine, and the evidences produced out of the law and the prophets for their confirmation, being determined to act agreeably to their sober and rational conviction, and accordingly (as the text tells us, *v. 12.*) *many of them believed.* Now, if a candid and impartial examination of a proposal, declared to be of the utmost consequence to mankind, be a certain mark of a *great and ingenuous* mind, and the acting agreeably to their most rational conviction, be an indubitable proof of *the truest wisdom*; an opposite behaviour, upon the same occasion, in the same circumstances, can only proceed from an idle, empty, trifling head, or a corrupt disingenuous heart.

The foundation of all religion is *the belief of a God, who is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Now he that cannot, from the visible face of nature and the works of creation, collect and infer the invisible things of God; that cannot, from a just observation of the immensity, the order, and beauty of the vast system of the universe, infer the necessity of a FIRST CAUSE, All-wise, All-powerful, and in every kind and degree of perfection, absolutely perfect, must be a creature of contracted views, narrow apprehensions, and a poor understanding; whom, without breach of charity, or good manners, we may venture to pronounce, as the royal psalmist does, A FOOL.

The man that allows the existence of such a
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PERFECT BEING, and does not consider the relation he stands in to that being, and the several obligations and duties arising from that relation, must be a stupid inconsiderate creature, who has not so good a title to honour and gratitude as the beasts of the field; for, as the prophet says, *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib*; but the profane irreligious man forgets and despises the great author of his being, and of every blessing he enjoys in this world, and all his reasonable hopes of happiness in that which is to come.

The man that has sense enough to discover all this, and to draw just and proper conclusions from it, and yet acts disagreeably to his own convictions, who lives in direct defiance of all those duties of religion, which both reason and revelation dictate to every attentive inquirer, discovers himself to be a weak, irresolute, mean-spirited creature, who has not courage enough to do what his reason and conscience assure him to be his duty.

Now if A FOOL that has not sense enough to apprehend the very foundation of a question in debate, nor the use of the terms, to draw proper conclusions from plain premises, nor pursue them into all their practical consequences, in which his interest and duty are ultimately involved, or has not courage or gratitude enough to act agreeably to his own convictions, can have any pretensions to *greatness of mind*, and by consequence to *honour* which arises from it, and is convertible with it, let the *filicst* reader judge.--- And this is directly the case of every irreligious man.

A *great mind* cannot help surveying, with wonder and devotion, the immensity, the order, the beauty of the works of God, and from thence collect

LETTER III.

FROM certain premises laid down in my two last letters upon the subject of *Honour*, I think I may venture to draw this certain conclusion, that *an irreligious immoral man, destitute of all sense of duty and devotion towards God, and of justice towards men, can never be a Man of Honour.*

That *Honour*, properly so called, arises from a certain greatness of mind, exerting itself upon all occasions with a propriety and dignity of behaviour, I presume, will hardly be denied me: and that *irreligion* and *immorality* proceed purely from a certain littleness of mind, a meanness of soul, an emptiness of head, and a baseness of heart, I shall endeavour to prove, and leave the honest reader to judge whether two such contraries can subsist in the same subject, much less whether the one can produce the other.

This view of the case suggests to me (by the bye) a charitable ground of hope for many of our modern unbelievers, that their poor souls will fare better at the last, than at present they seem either to desire or deserve; as their infidelity proceeds purely from a poverty of genius, and shortness of understanding, we charitably hope, that merciful abatements will be made on that account, and that they will be treated rather with the indulgence due to blockheads, than the severity due to obstinate disobedience and impenitence; that their irreligious contempt of divine worship will be imputed to a natural coldness and heaviness of soul, which renders them as incapable of exerting exalted acts of piety or devotion, as of composing

an heroic poem, or a fine piece of music; and therefore, like other idiots, whilst they continue tame and inoffensive, they may be tolerated with proper restrictions in civil societies; but if they grow ungovernable and mischievous, they ought to be laid under proper restraints and confinement, that they may neither injure the properties of private persons, nor disturb the peace of the public.--But to return.

True *greatness of mind* discovers itself in great and extensive views, and generous designs, it endeavours to enter into the true nature of things, to consider the true state of every momentous question in a just light, to procure all possible means and assistance to form a right judgment upon it, and a firmness of mind to act agreeably to such practical conclusions as naturally and clearly flow from them. This is *true greatness of mind* in the exercise of its intellectual faculties.---This was the glorious character given to the *Berean Jews*, *Acts xvii. 11.* that they were more noble than those of *Thessalonica*, in that they searched the scriptures daily to know whether the doctrines preached by *St. Paul*, concerning *Jesus Christ*, as proved from the writings of the Old Testament, were true or no. The *Jews* of *Thessalonica*, like our modern unbelievers, being *moved with envy*, (v. 5.) at their believing christian neighbours and the Apostles, who had been the preachers of this new religion, would not so much as bestow a thought to examine whether the Apostles doctrine was worthy of their attention or belief, but they raised the mob upon them, and set the *whole city in an uproar*, and dragged them before the magistrates, as disturbers of the public peace, and enemies to the civil

collect the infinite power and wisdom of him that made them, and preserves and directs their courses and operations.---A *little mind*, on the other hand, saunters through every scene of life, as an indolent unconcerned spectator, filling up the vacant spaces with all the trifling amusements and idle diversions that ignorance and folly can invent, without ever troubling his head, how, or which way, he was sent into this world, or what shall become of him hereafter; or if by chance, or out of curiosity, he should bestow a thought that way, it is not in a regular method of inquiry into the nature and causes of his existence, and the relation he stands in to his creator and the world about him, but fixes his attention upon one or more partial views; which, to an ignorant mind, that considers not the relation he bears to the rest of the system, may appear insignificant or irregular. Mr. *Addison* has very prettily compared one of these *minute philosophers* to a fly upon one of the pillars of *St. Paul's*, whose organs and perceptions cannot perhaps exceed a circumference of four or five inches diameter, but can have no possible perception or idea of the proportion, the beauty, the magnificence, or uses of the whole fabric. Now if one of those despicable animals should fall to reasoning with a club of his own species, upon the design, the symmetry, and uses of that noble structure, we might expect to hear the same ridiculous jargon, of aptnesses, fitnesses, moral congruity, and I know not what, as are usually heard among our *Free-thinkers*, when they pretend to talk of the stupendous works of the creation, the order and methods of providence, and the nature and use of religious worship.

A *great mind*, which, from a thorough survey of the works of God, can penetrate through them to their first cause and omnipotent creator, naturally falls into the consideration of the relation he bears, the obligations he is under, and the duty he owes him as his creator and preserver. He considers him as the author of his being, the bountiful giver of all the blessings he enjoys, that every article of his enjoyments, whether health of body, soundness of mind, riches, or friends, are all the gifts of God, which call for the most grateful returns of love, honour, and obedience.----A *little mind* regards nothing but itself, the present moment, the present enjoyment, without considering the hand that bestows it, the fountain from whence it flows, and therefore thinks himself intirely his own master, owing suit and service to no body, whose sole business is to please himself, and gratify every appetite and call of nature in what way and manner he shall think fit. Now that there can be no *honour* where there is neither *gratitude* nor *justice*, I believe will be easily granted. *Nihil est honestum quod justitiâ vacat*, is a saying of *Tully's*, and a maxim of common sense. To suppose *honour* without *justice*, would be to suppose a house without a foundation, fruit without a tree, or a tree without a root; there is not only an actual connexion, but a natural relation and dependence between them, *honour* being really *the lustre, the flower, the crown, and perfection* of *justice*. *An unjust man therefore cannot be a man of honour.*

That *ingratitude* is inconsistent with *honour*, is equally plain and undeniable, as it is a complication of every thing that is vile, sneaking, base, treacherous, and detestable in human nature. *Si ingratum*

sum dixeris, omnia dixeris. An ungrateful man therefore can never be a man of honour. And that every irreligious man is unjust and ungrateful, I shall endeavour to make appear, and leave the honest reader to draw the conclusion.

The lawyers define *justice* to be a constant and inviolable resolution to give to every one his due, tribute to whom tribute, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour is due: and particularly a just and faithful discharge of every trust and office committed to us. Now, that every blessing and comfort we enjoy in life are committed to us as a trust, that every trust must be limited to certain uses and purposes, that the nature of a trust renders him that receives it accountable for the uses or abuses of that trust, that the greater the trust, the greater is the obligation, and the greater will be the account, are such plain truths as ignorance itself cannot doubt of, or deny. So then every man has some talents committed to his trust, for which he must be accountable. But the great, the noble, and the rich, who are surrounded with blessings, who wallow in plenty, who want no opportunities of knowing and discharging the duties of their respective trust and station, are under the highest obligation to make such a use of their wealth their interest, and power, as is most agreeable to the nature of the trust, and the will of the donor; according to that certain maxim of common sense, *that where much is given, much will be required, and where either God or man hath given much, of him they will ask the more.* If these therefore are so far from answering the trust committed to them, that they deny their having received any such trust, if they renounce their allegiance to their Supreme Lord,
and

and convert the several trusts committed to them, to their own use; if, not content with this, they imploy their wealth and interest to quite opposite purposes than were intended by the grant, and encourage others to do the same, they are unjust and ungrateful to the best of beings, the Supreme Lord of heaven and earth; and whether he that acts unjustly in the exercise of the highest trust, and ungratefully to his best benefactor, can have any title to *true greatness of mind*, or *true Honour*, which is the same, let the silliest reader judge.

To set this matter in the strongest light, let us suppose a number of tenants holding estates of different value from the same Lord, that those who held the greatest farm had the easiest rent, perhaps nothing more than a small acknowledgment, but each of them having a fair copy of rules to direct them how to manage their farms, in order to secure the favour of the chief Lord, the continuance of their possession, and the justification of their accounts, could you think it possible for any reasonable creature to live in direct contempt and defiance of so bountiful a Landlord, so generous a benefactor, ? Could you think it possible that any of those great tenants should make it their business to persuade the rest of the little ones, that though they had been told, that they were accountable to some great Landlord, who lived in a remote country, yet there was really no such person; that their pretended set of directions was all a forgery, contrived by two or three crafty knaves, who pretended to act under the character and commission of stewards, in order to cheat the people out of their liberty and money; that all the while they were freemen, owing neither suit nor service to
any

any Lord, having no account to give, nor rent to pay, to any body, nor any body to please but themselves.---Does not such a supposition seem quite monstrous and impossible?---Yet such, if they could be found, would be sensible, grateful, honourable creatures, when compared with thousands, in this wicked, adulterous, free thinking generation: God Almighty is the supreme Lord of the universe, to whom the greatest prince upon earth is but a tenant at will. Our bibles are a body of rules and directions, by which we are to regulate our conduct, and be justified in our accounts. The *church* is his *court*, where the tenants are obliged to appear at stated times; the *clergy* are his *stewards*, whose duty it is to be daily putting the tenants in mind of the nature and uncertainty of their tenure, advising them to keep fair and clear accounts, because their Lord will certainly come at an hour when they do not expect him; that he will judge them according to their works, and appoint them their portion of happiness or misery for ever.---In direct opposition to this plain, incontestible truth, the block-heads, of this generation take upon them to assure the public, that there is *no God*; that the *scriptures*, which few of them are able to read, are all a *cheat and a forgery*; that the *clergy*, who pretend to be the *stewards* of his mysteries, are a *Pack of knaves*; and this, though a matter of the last consequence, that deserves the most serious examination, is treated as a matter of jest and ridicule, which is as great an argument of a little, ignorant, trifling mind, as of an impious, disingenuous, ungrateful heart. The man that could think, or talk, or act at this rate, about the health of his body, the interest

terest of his family, the improvement of his fortune, the exercise of his profession, and the ordinary affairs of common life, would be despised by men of sense and honour, as a trifling contemptible blockhead. Now if a poor wretch, who trifles and plays the fool in an affair of the last consequence, who disregards his own true interest, who violates the most sacred obligations, is ungrateful to his best benefactor, and impious to the best of beings, can have any pretensions to *Greatness of Mind*, or *True Honour*, let our enemies themselves be judges.

Give me leave, by way of conclusion, to present you with a little piece of a *Tatler*, supposed, to be writ by Sir *Richard Steele* (Feb. 18, 1709.) “When I was a young man about this town, I frequented the ordinary of the *Black Horse* in *Holborn*, where the person, that usually presided at the table, was a rough, old-fashioned gentleman, who, according to the custom of those times, had been the major and preacher of a regiment. It happened one day, that a noisy young officer, bred in *France*, was venting some new-fangled notions, and speaking, in the gaiety of his humour, against the dispensations of providence. The major, at first, only desired him talk more respectfully of one, for whom all the company had an honour; but finding him to run on in his extravagance, began to reprimand him, in a more serious manner. Young man, said he, do not abuse your benefactor whilst you are eating his bread; consider whose air you breathe, whose presence you are in, and who it is that gave you the power of that very speech, which you make use of to his dishonour. The young fellow, who thought to turn matters into a jest, asked him,
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if he was going to preach? but desired him, at the same time, to take care what he said, when he spoke to A MAN OF HONOUR.---A MAN OF HONOUR! says the major, thou art an INFIDEL and a BLASPHEMER, and I shall use thee as such. In short, the quarrel ran so high, that the major was desired to walk out; upon their coming into the garden, the old fellow advised his antagonist to consider the place into which one pass might drive him; but, finding him grow upon him to a degree of scurrility, as believing the advice proceeded from fear: Sirrah, says he, if a thunderbolt does not strike thee dead before I come at thee, I shall not fail to chastise thee for thy profaneness to thy maker, and thy sauciness to his servant; upon this, he drew his sword, and cried out with a loud voice, *the sword of the Lord, and of Gideon*; which so terrified his antagonist, that he was immediately disarmed, and thrown upon his knees. In this posture he begged his life; but the major refused to grant it, before he had asked pardon for his offence in a short extemporary prayer, which the old gentleman dictated to him upon the spot, and which his proselyte repeated after him in the presence of the whole ordinary, that were now gathered about him in the garden.

LETTER IV.

IN my last I attempted to prove, that an *irreligious man* could not possibly be a *Man of Honour*; that whosoever was ignorant or negligent of his duty to God, must be either a very silly, or a very

very indolent or ungrateful creature, and as such can have no possible pretension to that *greatness of mind*, in which alone *true Honour* consists. I shall now endeavour to prove, that an *immoral man*, one that lives in the habitual, open, unrepented violation of all, or any, of the duties of *morality*, or *natural religion*, can have no better title to honour than the irreligious unbeliever.

The adulterer, the murderer, the robber, whether in a public or private character, (condemned by the laws of the most savage and barbarous nations to infamy and death) have cut themselves off from all pretensions to *Honour* by a direct avowed violation of the primary and fundamental laws of reason, justice, and order: crimes that can admit of no colouring or excuse, for which nothing can be pleaded with any shadow of reason or common sense, but are generally carried off with a high hand, a hardened forehead, a loud laugh, and a libertine joke. It is really too gentle a censure upon such flagitious offenders only to say they are not *Men of Honour*, who have, by those atrocious crimes, degraded themselves to the lowest rank of malefactors. Nor can it be thought unreasonable to assert, that these flagrant crimes degrade men from all pretensions to *Honour*, when it is demonstrable that the not exerting all the opposite virtues in an open, ingenuous, amiable manner, is a sufficient disqualification. A man may be free from every notorious vice, and yet be an errant scoundrel. He may be just out of fear or policy, frugal and temperate out of covetousness, peaceable and harmless from a milkiness of blood; he may abstain from acts of violence out of cowardice, from lewdness for want of ability and opportunity;

portunity; and yet, in the state and temper of his heart, be so far from a *Man of Honour*, as to deserve all the infamy due to the most scandalous vices.

By the bye, I have often wondered that so polite and accurate a writer as Mr. *Addison* could be guilty of such a mistake, on so important a subject, as he puts into the mouth of *young Juba*, in the tragedy of *Caio*.

"Honour's the sacred tie, the law of king's,
 "The noble mind's distinguishing perfection,
 "That aids and strengthens virtue, where it meets
 her;
 "And imitates her actions, *where she is not*."

Where she is not!—is that possible? can true honour, even in idea, be separate from virtue? I think not. *The matter* of an honourable action is, *that it be just*; the *form*, that it be performed in a *polite, generous, amiable manner*. There is indeed to be found, even in the vilest criminals, a certain roughness and sturdiness of mind, that very nearly resembles it. The behaviour of a hardened malefactor, expiring under the torture, refusing to confess his guilt, or discover his accomplices, may impose upon the injudicious spectators, but surely has no real title to honour. The bully may resemble the hero in the appearance of courage, as prudes do vestals in the appearance of chastity; but he that can mistake the one for the other, must be very little acquainted with human nature, and the ways of the world. *True Honour* is consistent and uniform, as the immutable laws of truth and reason on which it is founded, and by which it

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subsists. Whoever, therefore, shall establish to himself, as a point of Honour, any thing that is contrary to his duty to God and his country, and the immutable laws of truth and justice; who shall think any thing honourable that is displeasing to his Maker, or injurious to society; who sacrifices any part of his duty, as a reasonable creature, to a ridiculous fashion, a prevailing error, or an importunate lust; who thinks himself obliged, by this principle, to the practice of some virtues, but not of others, is by no means to be counted a *Man of Honour*.

The malignity of a base corrupt heart discovers itself in a numberless variety of pestilent symptoms, fœtid eruptions, and disorderly motions, which which are neither cognizable in human courts, nor punishable by human laws, but are only known to the great searcher of hearts, who considers them as the root and spring from whence the most heinous and capital offences proceed. *The selfish, the voluptuous, the covetous, and the proud*, whom no human laws can restrain or punish, are as criminal in the sight of the Almighty, and as odious to his boundless love and spotless purity, as those notorious criminals who are daily recruiting *Newgate* and the *Plantations*.

Selfishness, or *self-love*, in opposition to public spirit and the love of the community, can only proceed from a weakness of understanding, and a baseness of heart. *Nemo sibi soli nascitur*, is an obvious maxim of nature and common sense; he that cannot see the force and obligation of it, must be a fool, and he that sees it, and acts disagreeably to it, is a polaron. *Public spirit* is inseparable from great minds, and is that alone which can qualify men to fill

fill the highest stations, and execute the most important offices with dignity and honour. The greatest princes, without it, degenerate into brokers and stockjobbers. If they consider themselves in any other light than the fathers of the people, the guardians of religion and liberty, the protectors of the oppressed, and the impartial and munificent patrons of real merit, they know not themselves the nature of their office, nor the design of their elevation. Wealth and power, if not acquired by virtuous and honourable means, and employed to virtuous and honourable purposes, are a disgrace and curse to the owner, and will be a sore article of account at the last great day. Avaricious princes, rapacious ministers, and venal tools, who consider nothing but themselves, and how they may support one another in the exercise of oppression and corruption, have so far forfeited all pretensions to honour, that they seem to have extinguished the common sentiments of humanity itself. Think how dishonourable and contemptible a figure the *Jewish* nobility made that could force the prophet *Isaiah* to make this sad complaint. *Isa. i. 23. Thy princes are rebellious, (thy great men are rebellious and disobedient to the laws of God) companions of thieves (advising, assisting, and sharing in the plunder of their country) every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards* (regarding nothing but their private interest, disposing of no favours, filling up no offices without a valuable consideration, seeing no merit but in the best bidder) *they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.* In short, great men, who have large possessions, extensive influence, and are set in high places, with-

without great souls, extensive generosity, and elevated views and designs, in spite of all their illustrious titles and badges of honour, will appear odious and contemptible to men of sense and virtue, even in the lowest stations of life. And when the influence of such examples shall, as it naturally will, infect the lower part of the people, and the herd of mankind, when public spirit shall become the jest of knaves and fools, that nation is not far from its ruin.

The *voluptuous* have no better title to *Honour*. As their whole business and employment in this world is to indulge every appetite, to gratify every demand of lust or fancy, without any regard to the reason, the justice, and decency of the action, they betray a shameful corruption of heart and weakness of understanding. The *Man of Pleasure*, whose whole profession is to pass merrily through the world, to murder time, and cool reflection; to be ever jovial, ever gay; to deny himself nothing that his eye can see, or his heart can wish, is not only a despicable, and dishonourable, but a dangerous, creature. If he cannot discover, from the exalted faculties and operations of his own soul, that he is a rational free agent, he must be very ignorant, and silly; and, if he knows it, and confesses it, and yet lives and acts in defiance of that conviction, he must be an irresolute unaccountable wicked creature. To see a reasonable, immortal being, endued with noble faculties, capable of noble reflections and generous resolutions, sacrificing his whole attention to some predominant vanity, is a reflection upon common sense. Be the object of his passion in its own nature ever so innocent, the diversions of the field, or the Assembly;

bly; if a pack of dogs or cards, equipage or show, wine or women, engross the whole man; he departs thereby from his proper rank in the scale of beings, sinks below the dignity of his species, and sets himself upon the level with the lowest animal. But if the passion fixes upon forbidden objects; if it tempts him to break inclosures, and invades, in any kind or degree, the property of his neighbours, he then becomes doubly criminal; he adds the malefactor to the brute, and intitles himself to all the guilt and infamy due to the vilest criminal: If a man, not content to gratify a passion in itself natural and innocent, in such a manner, and under such restrictions, as reason, justice, order and religion, have prescribed, he is so far from having any pretensions to *Honour*, that he deserves the contempt of the wise, the aversion, of the virtuous and good, and the censure and correction of the laws. A *modern fine gentleman*, who triumphs over the ruins of innocence and virtue, in the vanity of making prostitutes to a brutish appetite, and the powerful charms of his own dear irresistible person, is an animal destitute of religion, reason, decency, and common honesty. It is true, custom and fashion, and false notions of gallantry, have, in great measure, defaced the boundaries of vice and virtue, infamy and honour, in the fashionable world, and have not only encouraged these sons of infamy and shame to appear without blushing in the assemblies of the great, the fair, the polite, and even the virtuous, but also to be distinguished to advantage, and be encouraged to persevere in their iniquities, by the indulgence they receive from those who are obliged, by all the rules of equity and decency, to detest and abhor them,
and

and which, perhaps, would be the most likely way to bring them to shame and repentance.—I cannot dismiss this article without applying myself to these pernicious destroyers, as an advocate for that lovely part of our species, upon whose innocence, whose happiness, and love, the most agreeable worldly enjoyments of our sex, and the comforts of social life, chiefly depend. Let me ask them a serious question; would any of them be pleased to have their daughters, their sisters, their wards, or their friends, seduced, betrayed, and debauched, by the most detestable treachery, or compelled by violence to prostitution, diseases, beggary, infamy, and damnation? Were this question to be put to the greatest reprobate upon earth in cold blood, I dare say he would blush; but a man of any virtue, humanity, and goodnature, would be struck with horror and remorse, and would give me *Hazael's* answer to the prophet, *Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?* Yet such a sad dog is every one that does the same to another man's daughter, sister, or friend; for here the golden rule of justice determines the kind and degree of iniquity on both sides of the question to be the same.—When we read of a *Cyrus*, an *Alexander*, a *Scipio*, not only exhibiting illustrious examples of humanity, continence, and honour, in the warmth of youthful passions, the possession of beauty, the insolence of war, and triumphs of victory, but encouraging others to do the same; it ought to be an eternal reproach upon the low gallantries, the detestable hypocrisy, the inhuman treachery, and execrable purjuries, made use of by a set of poor wretches, who call themselves *fine gentlemen* and *Men of Honour*, when they have no other pretensions

ensions to humanity itself, than the power of propagating their own species, and that not with half that justice and decency as many of their fellow-brutes. Now, whether a man that can sacrifice every thing that is virtuous, honorable, and lovely in the most beautiful part of the creation to a brutish appetite, when he might have heightened and sanctified the same enjoyment by a rational and religious use of it, can have any pretensions to *reason, justice, humanity, decency, or Honour*, let the silliest, or the wickedest, reader judge, and pronounce accordingly.

Nor have the *covetous and penurious* a better title to *Honour*, than the *selfish and voluptuous*. By the *covetous*, I mean those who are intent upon getting; by the *penurious*, those who are intent upon saving and hoarding up whatever they can get, without any regard to the demands of justice, humanity, or charity. *The love of money* (the scripture tells us) *is the root of all evil*, and covetousness has in it all the guilt and folly of the most stupid idolatry. He that bows down to a stock or a stone, or offers incense to an idol, is not a more absurd ridiculous creature, than he who sacrifices his time, his health, his peace, his soul and body, to heaps of gold and silver, which, when they exceed the ordinary provision for the necessaries and conveniences of life, and the decent support of a family, are so far from adding to the comforts of life, that they are really an addition to its burdens; and, instead of securing and increasing the happiness of their owners, too often pierce them through with many sorrows. This is the voice of uncorrupt nature and unprejudiced reason, confirmed by the unanimous suffrage of wise and good men in all ages and nations

nations of the world. Were I to collect the testimonies of all the heathen moralists upon this head, it would fill a volume. In short, there is not extant a single heathen writer of morality, who does not, in the strongest terms, condemn an avaricious penurious temper, as a contradiction to every thing that is noble, generous, wise, and good, in human nature. Had *Cæsar* and *Hopkins* lived among heathens and barbarians, they would have been despised and condemned, by men of sense and virtue, as a disgrace to human nature, and a reproach to reason and common sense. Contempt of riches has, in all ages and nations, been regarded, by the truly great and noble, as the infallible mark of a great and noble soul, and was the distinguishing character of all the illustrious heroes and eminent philosophers of ancient *Greece* and *Rome*. *Seneca* is mentioned, by some, as an exception from this general rule; but, whatever his practice might be, his principles and precepts were different; and what wonder is it to see a heathen contradicting his principles in his practice, when we daily see christians do the same. Riches are then only a blessing, and their possession honourable, when they fall into generous hands, and are employed to generous and honourable purposes; in doing good, and making others happy, in supporting the distressed and miserable, and encouraging and rewarding indigent merit. But when I see a man, without one useful or amiable quality, exalted above measure on account of his great riches, without considering how they were acquired, and how they are employed, who fancies that any thing external to a man, any thing that may be common to either good or bad, and which is

too commonly the lot of the most worthless part of mankind, can render a man truly valuable or honourable, he must be a very silly creature, without any pretensions to *greatness or soundness of mind, to true Honour, or good understanding*. A rich knave or fool differs in nothing from a poor one, but in the aggravation of his guilt, or the ostentation of his folly. Would you see a compendious and beautiful view of all that wit and reason can dictate upon this subject? You will find it in Mr. Pope's excellent *Essay upon the true Use of Riches*.

LETTER V.

NOR have the proud and the ambitious a better title to *Honour and true greatness of mind*, than the selfish, the penurious, and voluptuous; though, as *Salust* long ago observed, * *ambition* has a nearer resemblance of virtue than *covetousness*, as it has the appearance of a just and laudable appetite for power and fame, which even wise and good men are fond of; but *covetousness* is a stupid love of money, which no man of sense or virtue could ever be guilty of coveting. But whatever similitude there may seem to be betwixt *pride* and *honour*, *ambition* and *true greatness of mind*, they are as far asunder as the swelling of a dropsy, from a full and robust habit of body. That the root of pride is folly,

* *Quod tamen vitium propius virtutem erat, nam gloriam, honorem, imperium, bonus & ignavus aequè sibi exoptant: Avaritia pecunia studium habet, quam nemo sapiens concupiscit.* Sall.

that ignorance is the mother of vanity, I shall endeavour to prove, and whether ignorance and folly be consistent with *true honour* and *greatness of mind*, let the silliest reader judge.

Whatever turn the folly may chance to take, in whatever form or colour it may appear, it is the same empty bubble, diversified by some accidental circumstance of position, or the medium through which it appears. Pride, in every shape, is but folly in a different dress. It appears in the most ridiculous light, when it grows out of the external and accidental advantages of birth and fortune, in which, as we could have no share, so, by consequence, we could have no merit. The man that exalts himself above measure upon the antiquity and nobility of his family, without those useful and amiable qualities, which alone can make men valuable and honourable, discovers as great a defect of sense, as of *true honour*, or *greatness of mind*.

It is certain that the virtuous descendants of virtuous and honourable ancestors, who not only support, but improve and increase, the original fund of family merit, by a train of correspondent actions, stand upon the highest ground, are placed in the most advantageous light, and have fairer opportunities of exerting a just and decent superiority, than those, though of equal merit, who want those distinctions, and are entitled to all that esteem and respect which will ever be paid, by men of sense and virtue, to those, who, in *Shakespeare's* phrase, *bear their Honours meekly*. But if a worthless wretch grows vain and insolent upon the merit of his ancestors, and demands respect and submission from wiser and better men than himself, purely on account of an empty title, or a superior estate,

State, the demand is ridiculous and unreasonable, being grounded on no pretensions, or shadow of merit. A man of superior knowledge, strength, or fortune, which he employs upon all occasions for the good and benefit of others, has a right to the esteem and gratitude of those who receive protection, advice, comfort, or pleasure from the communication of his excellencies; but no man has any real merit, or claim of respect, from others, because his ancestors were great and good men, whilst he himself wears *their* honourable distinctions to *his own* shame. A pompous title and glaring equipage may attract the attention and reverence of the undiscerning vulgar, whilst nothing but real merit, an open, sincere, and generous heart, can have any kind of pretension to the esteem and affection of the wise and the good. A great soul lies very often concealed under mean appearances, and many a sad wretch has glittered with all the external badges of Honour, who, in a virtuous age and nation, would have been thought a disgrace to the pillory.

To set this matter in a clearer light, let us examine a little into the ground and foundation of this *family merit*, and see whether it will be sufficient to support that grand superstructure that human vanity generally raises upon it.---If the honour of families consists in being able to trace back their pedigrees to distant ages, till they lose themselves in the darkness and obscurity of an unknown antiquity, we are all equally honourable in this respect, being all descended from an original equally antient, the same common father of mankind; but if it consists in having our ancestors distinguished by honourable offices, titles, posts,

posts, and badges of honour, and great estates, this requires other previous considerations in order to settle their merit upon a just and solid foundation. Let it be seriously enquired how these estates were acquired; how these titles and honours were obtained. When we see a vain man, puffed up with an opinion of his superior wealth, we naturally turn our thoughts upon the methods by which it was raised, and the uses that are made of it. If it were raised by virtuous and honourable means, by God's special blessing upon the industry, the frugality, the courage, the knowledge, the integrity, and the piety of their virtuous ancestors, there is a solid ground of inward satisfaction, if not of glory; and if it be employed to such, and such only, purposes as reason and religion direct; to acts of generosity, hospitality, and charity, the owner of such a fortune has double reason to rejoice in his portion, and to expect the reverence and affection of those who receive comfort and assistance from the overflowings of his prosperity: But if, on the other hand, the boasted fortune were founded in sacrilege or blood, rapine or fraud, oppression or vice, private or public plunder, the original is corrupt, the title is criminal, and the tenure dishonourable; it is (as the physicians say) an error in the first concoction, which can never be rectified in the second; what is unjustly got, is as unjustly detained; whatever is, in its own nature, wrong, can never, by any length of time or prescription, be made right; and the iniquity and dishonour that cleave to an unjust possession can never be done away; though, in the opinion of the world, they may, by length of time be diminished, or entirely forgotten. So as.

to titles, if they were really the honourable rewards of honourable actions, they do honour to their virtuous and honourable descendants; but if they were the rewards of successful villany, treachery, or treason, venality or corruption, or an infamous prostitution of public faith and character, to the vices and follies of a court, they leave a stain and a blot upon the bearer, which descends, without any real diminution of infamy or guilt, to the latest posterity. But you will say, it is possible there may arise, in such a family, a man of superior merit and virtues who may retrieve its honour, by being really worthy of all the undeserved distinctions bestowed upon his worthless ancestors. Doubtless this may be, and often is, the case; but then this still returns to the old foundation of *personal merit*, as the only real and natural fountain of *Honour*. Such a person, as this view of the case supposes, is not honourable because of his descent from such a stock, but because he has a sufficient fund of merit within himself, which would make him truly honourable, though he had sprung from the dregs of the people. *Personal merit*, therefore, founded in *true greatness of soul*, and *real virtue*, always was, and always will be, the sole foundation of *Honour*. Nobles have been seen to dishonour their titles by base and abject vices, and persons of mean extraction have advanced and ennobled their families by their great and excellent qualities: And as *it is more blessed to give than to receive*, so it is more honourable and glorious to leave honours to our posterity, than to receive them from our predecessors, to be the authors and founders of our own nobility, and, to use the expression of *Tiberius*, recorded by *Tacitus*, *Annal.*

nal. Lib. II. to be born of one's self, when he was endeavouring to palliate the defect of birth in *Curtius Rufus*, who was, in every other respect, a very great man, *Curtius Rufus videtur mihi ex se natus*. The first founders of every honourable family must have been such; must have raised themselves from an inferior state of obscurity and poverty, must have been the descendants of mean and ignoble progenitors, unless we could suppose that the first great man of the family sprung out of the earth, or dropt out of the clouds, with all his implements of honour about him, laden with such a stock of titles, coronets, ribbands, and what not, as might be distributed among all his posterity, from generation to generation.

Were the genealogy of every family, from the flood down to this present time, faithfully preserved, there would, probably, be no man valued, or despised on account of his birth; there would not be a beggar in the street, or a scoundrel in *Newgate*, but would find himself lineally descended from great men: And it is no improbable conjecture, that the poor negroes, whom some of our planters hardly consider as part of our species, are lineally descended from *the father of the faithful*, who was *the friend of God*, (*Isa. xli. 8.*) Nor is there in the world a family so rich, as not to have some poor; or so noble and honourable, as not to have some vicious, lewd, lazy, worthless branches descended from it, if not the founders of it.---I was once at a noble lord's table, where a fawning parasite was offering up a good deal of this nauseous family incense, in return for a good dinner, which he had just received. My lord, who had a soul too great, and a taste too delicate, to relish such
falsome

fulsome flattery, cut him short with this rough sensible rebuke *pr'ythee Ned*, said he, *let us have no more of this stuff. That is, in my opinion, the most honourable family, that has the fewest r---gues and wh---res in it.* It would, doubtless, be a very entertaining sight, to see the progenitors of any one family in the world, for two or three thousand years backward, passing in review, with all their proper ensigns of dignity, or marks of infamy, all the proper distinctions of honour or dishonour, virtue or vice, riches or poverty. How many knaves and fools, as well as heroes and philosophers, would appear in so long a descent! How many different scenes of riches and poverty, scythes and sceptres, rags and ribbands swords, spades, and pick axes, &c. would diversify the motley procession!

I was t'other day to visit my honoured friend and kinsman *Leoline ap Rhees, ap Shenken, ap Howell, ap Tudor, ap Gurgoin*, Esquire, who, like a primitive hero and philosopher, supports the dignity of the most antient family in the world upon a pretty patrimonial estate of *15l. per Annum*, which he boasts has never been increased by usury or trade, by rapine or fraud, or diminished by luxury, for above seven hundred years last past. His chief riches and glory consist in a large roll of parchment, that will almost cover one quarter of his estate, in wick he boasts a pedigree, rising up to near an hundred years after the flood, though my good cousin verily believes it might be proved, that he descended in a direct line from *Noah himself*, and if that could be fairly made out, it would follow that he was lineally descended from *Adam*; and though any reasonable man would think that as much as, in conscience, he could expect or desire;

fire; yet, as my cousin never makes any boast of this great ancestor, he plainly insinuates that his family subsisted long before that pretended Father of Mankind was so much as thought of. As this parchment-tree is very antient, and the rats have made some depredations upon the family, which have occasioned many breaks and mutilations in the pedigree, care has been taken, from time to time, to supply the several vacancies with such characters as may be supposed to do most honour to the venerable stock, and are most fit to appear in a genealogy of heroes. My cousin, to say the truth, is a complete *person* of Honour. He knows how to support the dignity of his character, and, at the same time, to shew, upon proper occasions, all that humility and condescension that are inseparable from *good sense* and *true honour*; so that, though he scorns to foul his fingers with the dirty business of trade, or puzzle his brains with the pedantry of learning, nor give place to any little, up-start, *post-diluvian* mushroom, who may have raised an estate by his hands, or his brains; yet he will sometimes humble himself so far as to honour them with a visit, to accept of a dinner, or sometimes half a crown, only to shew his good-nature, and that he is no more above the receiving the homage and service of his inferiors, than the richest landlord from the poorest tenant, or the greatest prince from the meanest subject; though perhaps he quickly forgets the favour, and bescoundrels the man that bestowed it. As he was one day indulging the vanity of his heart among his honourable ancestors, a wag in the company put him in mind of his grandfather, who had been hanged for *sheepstealing*. My cousin, with a sigh and

and a shrug, acknowledged the fact; but not without a hearty curse upon the memory of the then reigning minister, who, whilst he was lavishing away honours and titles, posts and pensions, upon some that better deserved his fate, took no care to prevent the untimely fall of a truly great man, by making him at least an Admiral, a General, a Judge, or a Privy-Counsellor.

Now, that there is no real, intrinsic, and substantial good in all the advantages of birth and fortune, even folly itself must confess. But suppose there were; yet, considering the uncertain duration, the precarious tenure, that they may be forfeited, even in this life, to the sentence of justice, or the breath of the people, which alone can keep the bubble in play, and prevent its sinking into nothing; or if not that, yet we are sure it will die with us; it will then fail us, when we shall have most occasion for comfort, I mean in the agonies of pain and sickness, and the hour of death; no wise man can think there is any thing valuable in it but the opportunities and interest it may give us to do more good in the world, and promote the benefit and happiness of mankind. Now, whether a man that doats upon an imaginary treasure, that only seems to stuff out an imaginary idea of human greatness, but which can neither make him wiser, nor better; that can neither give health to his body nor peace to his mind; that can neither prolong his life, nor give him comfort at the hour of death, can have any better pretensions to *true greatness of mind* than children, or lunatics, diverted with play things, and delighted with baubles.—Let themselves be Judges.

I cannot dismiss this article without a few melancholy reflections upon the vanity of worldly greatness, and the infatuation that generally attends it even beyond the grave. I particularly mean that solemn mortifying farce of grandeur, that, by the custom of many nations, is acted over the graves of great men. There cannot (I think) be a sorer satire upon human weakness and folly, than to see a herald, dressed in all his habiliments, breaking the white rod, and making solemn proclamation, that, *whereas it has pleased Almighty God to take out of this miserable world the soul of the most noble, mighty, and puissant prince, &c.* What pompous epithets are these for a poor breathless sinner, whose body is condemned to be food for worms and creeping things, and his soul perhaps----! Better, methinks, it would be to proclaim aloud to the audience all the virtuous, memorable, and righteous actions of the deceased, to which all the people should give their solemn attestation, and bless the memory, whilst they bewail the death of the departed saint, or hero; to challenge them to make full and due proof of any unjust or dishonourable action, with a promise, in the name of the successor, of full and ample reparation. This would be putting the character upon a right foot of Honour, and giving public proof that he was determined to support and maintain the honour of his family, by making honourable reparation for all the injuries which the ignorance or iniquity of his predecessor might have committed.---Like that solemn and glorious appeal, which the great Prophet Samuel made, in his own person, to the multitude, when he was resigning the sovereignty, which he had so long and so gloriously executed among them. 1 Sam.

xii. 3. Behold, here I am, witness against me, before the Lord, and before his anointed. Whose ox have I taken, or whose ass have I taken? Whom have I defrauded, or whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it.---Blessed and truly honourable would the memory of that man be, to whom the universal voice of the people could give the same solemn attestation that was then given: *And they said, Thou hast not defrauded nor oppressed us; neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand. And he said unto them, The Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness against you, this day, that ye have not found aught in my hands. And they said, HE IS WITNESS.*

LETTER VI.

I Think I have sufficiently shewn the vanity of being proud of any of the outward advantages of fortune, birth, or station, from this single consideration, that nothing accidental or external can add any real excellency to our natures; can make us wiser or better, or more truly honourable; they add nothing to the man, they communicate nothing to the soul, which is the only seat of true greatness and *Honour*. Let us now examine whether those things, that are more properly our own, be able to furnish out any better excuses for vanity and pride: These are either the excellencies of the body, or the mind. Of the first sort, are beauty and strength: Of the second, knowledge or learning. That on the former of these there is no dependence, is the melancholy object of every day's experience.

perience. Sickness or sorrow, pain or grief (from which the fairest and strongest have no exemption, no protection) will quickly deface the finest beauty, wither the most blooming face into paleness, wrinkles, and deformity, and break the strength of the stoutest and strongest man in the world; so that these, at first sight, appear too weak and insufficient to support that superstructure of vanity that the weak and silly are too apt to raise upon it. If there be any thing that can support or excuse this presumption, it must be the *talents of the mind*; these seem to be immediately our own, and intirely peculiar to us, and give a man a superiority much more agreeable to a spiritual and rational being, than all the advantages of beauty, birth, titles, riches, and fortune, which are all external, and foreign to the man; whereas the mind is properly our own, or rather is ourselves, and constitutes our very essence.

That the most exalted improvements of human understanding are no sufficient foundation for vanity or boasting, might easily be made appear from numberless considerations. Were I to consider particularly the tediousness and difficulty of attaining to any tolerable degree of knowledge in any art or science, the obscurity and shortness of our conjectures upon the most concerning questions, the little dependence we have upon the strength or continuance of our intellectual abilities, the slender partition there is betwixt wisdom and madness, learning and folly, how small an accident or disorder in the animal œconomy, the ferment of the fluids, or the heart of the brain, would confound and destroy the finest understanding; it would be sufficient to mortify the proudest heart into a sober

ber and religious degree of humility, gratitude, and devotion; it would convince every serious considerate man, that the highest pitch of knowledge he can attain, cannot furnish him with a tolerable excuse for vanity or self-conceit; that there is really in the nature of things no foundation to support it; that all the appearances of it are founded in the weak and partial comparisons we make between ourselves and others; and that this comparative superiority is only betwixt ignorance and imperfection, and arises purely from self love, and a narrow understanding. If the most learned man in the world would go out of himself, and survey the numberless works of God, and wonders of nature, where no certainty can be obtained by the strongest human genius, and most comprehensive understanding, it would dissolve the charm, break the bubble, and remove the illusion, which swell the hearts of the silly and the vain into an opinion of superior wisdom or greatness, and shew them the imperfection of the most exalted human knowledge.

All our knowledge is either of *words* or *things*. The knowledge of *words* or languages is the gate of science, the path of knowledge, but so long and so tedious, that it takes up a good deal of the short span of life to be able to attain to a competent knowledge of them, insomuch that many are so weary as to stop there, to sit down contented with their present attainments, and proceed no further. Numbers of these are to be found in the learned world, who consider themselves and each other as prodigies of learning, men of profound erudition, only for being able to express their ignorance in variety of languages. Their conversation and
writing

writing embellished with scraps of foreign languages, which they think much more valuable and instructive than plain good sense and sound reason, expressed in their own native language. I had once the honour of being acquainted with one of those learned gentlemen, who directly answered the character that *Boileau* gives of a pedant, *Tout herissé de Grec & bouffi d' Ignorance*. Who could never be persuaded that *Norris* and *Locke* were men of learning, because there was hardly a quotation of *Greek* or *Latin* to be found in their writings.

Our knowledge of things is at best short and imperfect, full of obscurity and uncertainty; the little the wisest of us knows extends no further than our own system of the parts, of which we have only a general and superficial knowledge; we see no further than the surface and outside of things, as directed by the general law of motion; all beyond this is mere guess-work, conjecture, and uncertainty. And the vanity of our superior knowledge can only proceed from superior ignorance, the ignorance of ourselves, our souls, our bodies, their union, their mutual affections, their several relations to the rest of the system, and the impressions they receive from them. Let the wisest man but go out of himself, and survey the immense extent of nature, the variety of its works, the regularity of its motions, and the harmony of providence; and let him seriously pronounce how little is his real knowledge, how great his ignorance. Let him take a prospect of the vast dimensions of those astonishing heaps of matter that lie within the reach of his senses; let him consider the stupendous motions that agitate the vast mass of matter, and whirl about the numberless immense bodies

dies that take their courses through the unmeasurable space; and carry his thoughts into that immensity, where imagination itself can find no limits: let him consider that infinite duration which is before and after him, and, finding his own life included in it, let him observe the little scantling of it that falls to his share. Let him thence carry his thoughts into the intellectual world, that infinite number of good and evil spirits, with all their several orders, ranks, and classes, who have their distinct offices and habitations in the several centers of light and darkness; let him consider the vast multitude of the dead in their several receptacles and mansions, who, though dead to us, are now more alive and active than when they were united to these mortal bodies: let him add to these all the living inhabitants of this earthly globe, how few there be that know him, that think of him, or have any thing to do with him, and then return to himself, and consider what rank he holds in the universal system, what is his strength, his power, his knowledge; above all, let him contemplate the incomprehensible attributes of him who made all those creatures; who is always present to every one of them, supports and governs them; sees at once into the minds of such an infinite variety of *free agents*, and directs their thoughts and passions to carry on his designs in the management of the whole, yet without offering any violence to their *free agency*; instead of dwelling upon his own scanty portion of knowledge, wisdom, and power, and comparing it with some of his inferior fellow creatures, let him draw the comparison between himself and his creator; and if, after this survey, he can find any occasion for vanity, boasting,

ing, or self-conceit, he must be either an obstinately blind, or a contemptibly silly, creature.

But supposing the most that can be supposed, that our knowledge were as perfect as our rank and nature can require, there would still be as little room for vanity and boasting. The perfection of our nature consists not in the soundness or extent of our understanding; all the knowledge and learning in the world, if it tends not to humble the natural pride of our hearts, to teach us the knowledge of ourselves, to purify our affections, to mend the heart, and make us better men, if it does not tend to promote in us, humility, devotion, and charity, *though we could talk with the tongues of men and of angels, we should be but as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.* The Devil, doubtless, knows more than the most learned, or perhaps, than all the learned men in the world, and yet is the most miserable of all beings. The immense capacity, the mighty powers, the extensive views, and fiery perceptions of his angelic nature, whilst separate from the meek light and love of God, are to him an infinite fund of anguish, an abyss of misery and despair. No; the perfection of our nature is a pure heart enlightened by faith, and animated by charity; and it is really a mortifying thought, to consider, how seldom a clear rational head, and an honest upright heart meet together. I have often reflected, with grief and pity, upon several eminent characters, both among the living and the dead; persons blessed with superior talents, great intellectual abilities, men that could reason, compute, and infer, and draw rational conclusions, who yet employed them to no better purpose than to contrive and execute the base ungenerous designs

signs of a covetous, proud, ambitious heart; who, whilst they were capable of advising and assisting the helpless, the ignorant, and unknowing, in the fraudulent ways of this crooked world, yet have not honesty enough to advise you for your interest, if they could mislead you, in order to improve their own, and make your ignorance and credulity a step to their own promotion, and the advancement of their fortunes. Hence you too often see, in almost all societies, even of learned men (I wish I could except the most sacred!) from the conclave, down to the governors of a petty grammar-school, as much artifice, intrigue, chicanery, and----- as in a poor little country corporation. In short, we may pronounce, as the *apostle* did upon another occasion, *all men seek their own*. All that sincerity, generosity, charity, and public spirit, which are inseparable from great and noble minds, are buried under the low views, the sordid designs, the selfish ambitious schemes, of corrupt ungenerous hearts. There is nothing more frequent, nor more to be lamented, than to see the greatest patrons, ecclesiastical as well as civil, betrayed by their too great confidence in the treacherous professions and pretences of selfish and designing favorites, into such unworthy promotions, as their own generous hearts, if not deceived, would abhor; whilst men of equal or superior merit, are neglected or discouraged, for fear they should stand in the way, and obstruct the covetous or ambitious views of the reigning favourite.

I am led into this way of thinking, by the remembrance of my own particular sufferings, which though I have long ago forgiven, I shall never forget. Give me leave to tell you my own story,

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which I shall make as short as I can. At my first setting out from the university to try my fortune among other adventurers in the great lottery of the world, I had the good fortune to be well recommended to three eminent persons in town. They quickly agreed to present me to a certain great minister and patron, who received me in a manner, as much exceeding my expectations as my desert, and dismissed me with strong assurances of his favour. A favourite domestic, who was a kind of *Premier* in the family, who really wanted nothing but an honest heart to make him truly a great man, congratulated me upon the kind reception I had met with, and promised to improve every opportunity of promoting my interest. I departed, well satisfied that my fortune was made, that I had nothing more to do but to qualify myself for future favours, by endeavouring to deserve them. Accordingly, I retired to my studies, and was, in my own imagination, possessed of every thing that could make my future life happy: It was not long before a vacancy happened, which my friends immediately concluded would just answer my reasonable expectations, and determined to wait upon his lordship, and beg it for me. They were received by my worthy friend, who had promised to be my advocate, and were told, that his lordship was at present engaged, but he would watch a proper opportunity of recommending me in such a manner, that he could scarce doubt of success. Upon the first information, I hastened to Town, to wait upon my patron, and acknowledge his favour; but, to my great surprise, I found it had been given away, the day before, to another, upon the sole recommendation of

of my very worthy and learned friend, upon whose assurances I had so heartily depended. However, I rallied up all the philosophy I was master of, and, like the honest man in the *Oxford jests*, determined, since I could not get a place in town, to take one in the stage coach, and leave the treacherous and cunning seekers of this world to scramble and divide its favours among them. Accordingly I retired to my little patrimony, where I have lain many years buried among the ignorant and the merry, the noisy and the loud; neglected and forgotten by all, but him that made me. I am so much a philosopher and a christian, as freely to forgive my very worthy friend for falling into the ways of the fashionable world, in which his ambition tempted him, and his talents enabled him, to appear to advantage; but had I been in his case, and he in mine, I think I could never have forgiven myself such treacherous inhuman behaviour to an open-hearted, undesigning person, whom I had encouraged to depend upon my assistance, only that I might have an opportunity to disappoint and betray him.

I had not mentioned this story of my departed friend, (rest and peace to his soul!) but as a friendly admonition to the living, who may be tempted by the same corrupt views, in like circumstances, to fall into the same indirect practices. *Insincerity*, even among the *insincere*, even in courts and high places, is condemned as detestable by those who practise it, but as horrid and execrable by those who suffer by it.---Not to distinguish a man of real merit, is a mark of ignorance; not to prefer such a man, in my judgment and esteem, shews a meanness of soul; not to endeavour to procure him
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the rewards of such merit, when I have it in my power to do it, is an argument of an indolent, selfish, or envious spirit; to refuse him my best assistance, when he humbly craves it, is inhuman, ungenerous, and dishonourable. But if, unasked and unfought, I offer my assistance, and pretend to serve him; if my insincere professions of friendship betray him into an unhappy dependence upon me, and a neglect of other applications, which might have been made with better success; if I improve his unhappy security into an occasion of betraying him, whilst I pretend to serve him: If, not content with this, I should insult the unhappy sufferer, make a jest of his credulity, and expose him to the ridicule of others----I should abhor myself, and think I deserved to be kicked out of the creation.

LETTER VII.

AS my hopes and fears for this world are very moderate, I endeavour to pass through it with a philosophical indifference, rather as a silent and impartial spectator, than as one that has any real interest in it, or concern about it. I often see, with a mixture of indignation and pity, the mean shifts, the dirty services, the abject compliances, that are necessary to engage the favour of the great, and make a tolerable appearance among the candidates for wealth and power. *Selfishness, a narrowness of soul, and baseness of heart,* are the bitter root of this pernicious evil. Every man of this make is his own first cousin, nearest relation,

relation, and best friend; and considers his present portion of interest, wealth, and power, in no other light than that of an improvable stock for the sole behoof and benefit of the proprietor, and therefore turns his whole attention to ways and means of making the said improvements. This is his single view; whatever character he assumes, whatever professions he makes, all terminates in himself. All his pretensions to generosity, friendship, honour, and public spirit, are only thin disguises to conceal the abject views, and base designs, of a selfish ungenerous heart. Those, whom he pretends to honour with his friendship and confidence, in his heart he regards only as so many tools, or instruments, necessary for the execution and support of this great and important point, to blow up an immense bubble of vanity, and preserve it as long as possible from bursting. This is the true state and temper, of all the ambitious; the covetous, the selfish seekers of this world. Were you to apply by yourself, or your friend, to such a person as a patron, your real character, your absolute and personal merit, whether you were a man of ability, virtue, and honour; whether you were fit to be trusted with such a commission, to fill such a post, or execute such an office, with dignity and courage, would be no part of the question; but whether he will come into measures; whether he will obey the word of command; whether he be fit to answer several other purposes, to promote the several schemes he has in view, or perform any secret services which the necessity of his affairs may require. This will be the sole standard and test of this spurious equivocal merit. For when the head and heart of a
patron

patron are perverted by sinister views, indirect schemes, and selfish designs, he will be sure to encourage none but such as he is assured are both able and willing to promote the same views, and assist in the execution of any favourite scheme, which he may think necessary for the increase or security of his fortune, his power, or his person. Now, when I see a man sacrifice his understanding and conscience to his ambition or his covetousness, or be a tool or a slave to the selfish, partial corrupt schemes and intrigues of others; in whatever form or figure he may appear, I consider him in no other light than that of a *pimp*, or *procurer*, and I think it is hardly a matter of question, which is the most infamous profession of the two, to be a *pimp* to a man's lusts, or to his vanity and ambition. The former is, indeed, in common estimation, reckoned the more scandalous; but the latter may be more truly infamous, and much more detestable, because the former may concern none but himself and his w---re; but the other may have fatal and execrable consequences upon posterity. This single consideration may account for numberless whimsical promotions that have been, and may hereafter be, made in all ages of the world. Hence it has come to pass, that many poor creatures, whom nature designed for rat-catchers or pedlars, have been set in high places, exalted above their betters, have wallowed in luxury and plenty, whilst better men have wanted bread. If there were no terrible consequences attending this pernicious evil, it would be ridiculous enough to know and consider the many and peculiar kinds and degrees of merit, to which some fortunate people have owed their promotion, in every scene
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of life. The being useful or necessary to a patron; the marrying a near relation, or the being able to requite one good turn with another, have always been esteemed good and laudable reasons for preference; but, that a man should owe his promotion purely to a wrong turn of head, or corruption of heart; to a ridiculous cast of face, or set of features, is a little whimsical and unaccountable.-----

I had once the honour to be paying my duty to a great minister, who, in the hunting season, was come into the country to enjoy the pleasure of that healthy diversion. At supper he was mentioning to me, with great marks of approbation and esteem, a young clergyman, who appeared that morning upon the field, well mounted, smartly dressed, and one of the most alert sportsmen he had ever seen; and concluded with saying, *He is a clever young fellow, I must, and will, take care of him*: And, had not this reverend sportsman been forced, soon after, to travel into foreign countries, in order to escape hanging in his own, which he richly deserved, he might, for aught I know, before this time, have been-----

Men that have pushed their fortunes, and raised themselves by such odd and unworthy arts, as none but the worthless and undeserving could ever practice, contract by degrees an habitual narrowness of soul, and a judicial poverty of heart, incapable of every generous thought, every noble and useful design, of enjoying their plenty and honour, and supporting their characters with dignity and ease, and employing their interest and fortune for the good and benefit of mankind, but raging with an insatiable thirst and appetite for more. Such as these are to be met with in every
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state of life; little, hungry, penurious creatures, who, though never so full, are never satisfied; who, though they have much more than they deserve, or know how to enjoy, are always craving for more; and what to do? why, only to enrich some worthless booby, whilst they suffer men of learning, probity, and honour, to starve.---I remember, many years ago, a humorous mad fellow about town, who had the *splendida bilis* to an extravagant degree. He was, by profession, a *maker and mender of souls*. He had a mould for the former, and a *philosophical tenter* (as he called it) for stretching the narrow and contracted, and extending them to their due demensions. As I was one day trudging down the *strand*, I chanced to see him, in close conference with that little shriveled old fellow, *Gripe, the scrivener*. An interview betwixt two such extraordinary persons, I thought, must be something very particular, and I had curiosity enough to make a halt to see the event. My friend, the operator, happening to spy me across the street, leaves his patient, and steps over to me. Sir, said he, *what do you think? I have been offering that old fellow to make him a soul; the dog says, he has one already, but I can hardly believe him; I am sure, if he has, it was none of my making; and I offered to make him a dozen better and larger than his for a groat. Why, said I, did you not offer to tenter his old one? tenter him!*---said he,---*rot him, I would as soon try to tenter a cobweb,---I am sure it is so thin, and so rotten, it would break under my hands, like a piece of wet brown paper.* The moral of this mad speech is applicable to thousands. *Qui capit, ille facit.*

Mankind may be fairly divided into *Patrons* and *Clients*; some who are able to give, and others who

who want to receive : Some who have favours to bestow, and others who have favours to ask : Some who are forced to depend upon the assistance and protection of others, or make others depend upon them. The necessities of mankind, and the inequality of their fortunes, make this dependance necessary ; and it is the business of philosophy and religion to regulate the exercise, and direct the management, of this dependance, so as to make it useful to the public, and answer the great purposes and designs of providence, which is, to make one man's superfluity a relief to another's necessity ; one man's strength a support to another man's weakness ; all mutually conspiring to promote the glory of God, the welfare of the public, and the benefit and happiness of each other. Now, when men of merit, who are not always the favourites of fortune, are distressed in their worldly circumstances, and find there is nothing to be got but by mean and dishonourable practices, they are too often tempted to let go their integrity, and swim with the general stream of corruption, rather than starve with honour and a good conscience ; for, as neither of these are marketable commodities, no wonder that gold and silver, with a good proportion of brass, carry all before them ; and if, under such discouragements, there be a visible decay of virtue, honour, and public spirit, who can wonder ?

It is a reproach to religion, humanity, and a liberal education, that there should be found, among men of learning, and, in other respects, of fair and virtuous characters, that meanness and littleness of mind, as to regard none but themselves ; to ingross and inclose the whole fountain of favour, and exclude the modest and sincere from the
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observation of those, who, if they knew them, might be disposed to favour and reward their modesty and merit; or, by vile calumny or misrepresentation, traduce and expose the characters of those whom they envy, hate, or fear, as rivals and competitors. Nothing gives me a greater idea of those two great men, *Horace* and *Virgil*, than that they could, without jealousy, or emulation, recommend and support each other in the favour of the most polite and munificent patron in *Rome*. They were mutually conscious of each other's merit in their different places; there was no competition for favours, nor did either of them think himself eclipsed or injured by any applause or advantages received by the other. *Non isto vivitur illis quo, tu vere, modo*, is the answer that either of them would have given to the impertinents of this age, as well as of that. These were the natural dictates of an open ingenuous mind, of a large and generous heart: But when I see men of excellent understanding and eminent learning, intent upon nothing but their own advantage, aiming at nothing but riches and power, undermining, supplanting, and betraying every man whom they apprehend may stand in his way, and obstruct their selfish, covetous, or ambitious designs, I view them in no other light than that of *religious knackers*, or *learned stockjobbers*. Let a man's head be ever so full of learning, or cunning, of what sort soever it be, if it be under the direction of a little, corrupt, selfish, covetous heart, let their state or employment be what it will, whether it be in stocks or sciences, lottery-tickets or various readings, whether in libraries or *exchange alley*, solving problems or cracking nuts; publishing new editions
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or singing old ballads, reading lectures, making mouse-traps, or selling turneps, they are all equally removed from all pretensions to *true Honour*, or *Greatness of Mind*.

Good Sense and true Honour are ever attentive to true merit, in whatever form or dress it appears, ever ready to bestow or procure due encouragement and suitable rewards, to relieve the indigent, support the industrious, and raise, out of obscurity and want into light and plenty, the modest and deserving, who have wanted opportunities of appearing in the world to advantage. I was much delighted with the graceful and generous manner in which the late archbishop of Rheims (*Le Tillier*) introduced the celebrated father *Mabillon* to *Lewis XIV.* Sir, said he, *I have the honour to present to your majesty the most learned and modest monk in your kingdom.* This was the language of a great soul, truly worthy of a person of his eminent worth and station, who considered his modesty as adding lustre and dignity to his learning, and making that an introduction and recommendation to the royal favour, which, without such a patron, might have been the most likely to exclude him from it for ever.

Patronage, whether in church or state, is the exercise of a great branch of power. Power, in all its branches and subordinations, whether natural or political, ecclesiastical or civil, is a talent or trust derived from the supreme fountain of power; for the uses or abuses of which, a severe account will one day be required. The nature and uses of this trust are clearly implied in the very nature of the grant, which is, that it be exercised upon proper objects, and in a proper manner. All that are employed in this trust, from the king to the

the petty constable, are considered as ministers, vice-gerents, and officers, accountable to him from whom they have received it. The prince is the immediate *minister of God*, Rom. xiii. 4. Subordinate magistrates are his ministers, deputies, or vice-gerents, accountable to him for the management of the respective provinces. The uses of this delegated authority, or ministerial power, can be no other than what are agreeable to the nature and will of the supreme lord. And these, both reason and revelation assure us, are to be a terror, *not to good works, but to the evil; revengers to execute wrath upon them that do evil*, Rom. xiii. 4. For the punishment of evil-doers, and the praise of them that do well, 1. Pet. ii. 14. Now, if princes, and all that are put in authority under them, would truly and indifferently minister justice to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and the maintenance of true religion and virtue, things would quickly be put upon a right foot, and all competitions for favour would be brought to a peremptory and impartial decision, by the unerring rule of truth and righteousness; the evil-doers would have nothing to hope, and the well-doers nothing to fear; real merit, virtue, and honour, would be the never-failing steps to preferment; infamy and shame would be the inseparable companions of vice and iniquity. The learned, the pious, and the good, would have the first and fairest claim to the favours of the great; and the enemies of religion and of honour would be banished not only from the courts of princes, but even from the houses and countenance of all good men; and the truly honourable, of both sexes, would be as much ashamed of appearing in the company of a libertine, or infidel, as to be caught in a *disba-*
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bille, or in company with a bawd, or a pick-pocket ; and the rewards of virtue would be given to none but those who had merit enough to deserve them.---I shall conclude with a short story.---Once upon a time, there lived, in a certain nation, a man of *true Honour*, & a considerable patron, who, in the disposal of his favours, regarded nothing but the real merit of the receiver. He had long entertained very favourable intentions towards a clergyman of great merit, who had lain so long buried in the obscurity of a country village, under the insolence and oppression of a wrong-headed country 'squire, that the poor man looked upon himself as quite hopeless, helpless, and friendless; when, all of a sudden, this worthy patron surprised him with the presentation to a living of very considerable value. The poor man, amazed at this unexpected generosity, immediately waited upon his patron, with all those decent and grateful acknowledgments which so uncommon a favour might be reasonably thought to deserve. The patron cut him short with this rough, good-natured reply: *Sir, pray spare your speeches, and keep your compliments to yourself; you are under no manner of obligation to me. For, had I known a more deserving man in England than yourself, you should not have had it.*

LETTER VIII.

A *Just Sense of Honour* proceeds from a consciousness of some inherent worth or excellency in ourselves, or some honourable relation we bear to our maker or fellow-creatures; from
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some real superiority we enjoy on the stage of life, or in the scale of being, which never fails to inspire a great and generous mind with noble sentiments, suitable and correspondent to the real dignity of our state and nature, so as to scorn to be guilty of an unworthy or dishonourable thought, word, or action, that may disgrace our real character, or degrade us from the rank in which we shine, to the level of our inferiors. Thus in the scale of beings, men in general glory in distinguishing themselves from the brutes, by exerting their rational and intellectual faculties, in such a manner, and to such noble ends and purposes, as the great author of our being intended: so they distinguish themselves from children, and men of sense from fools, by acting agreeably to their superior sense and knowledge, and shewing a manly and rational contempt of those baubles and trifles, which are the supreme delight and enjoyment of childhood and folly. Men that are exalted to high stations, either in church or state, distinguish themselves from the world below them by such vigilance, attention, integrity, and courage, as their exalted stations, the greatness of their charge, and the extent of their provinces, may require; and the man of *quality and Honour* distinguishes himself from his inferiors, not so much by his title and equipage, as by the candour of his mind, the benevolence of his heart, the politeness of his manners, and the generosity of his actions; and therefore scorns to tarnish the lustre of his character, by saying or doing any thing that has a mean, sordid, or ungenerous appearance: and the truly good christian, whose hope, and treasure, and conversation is in heaven; who considers

ders himself as a citizen of the *new Jerusalem*, keeps his heart and eye immoveably fixed upon the glorious dignity, the immortal honour of his high calling in Christ Jesus, which he scorns to sacrifice to lust or pride, ambition or covetousness, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world; well knowing that this present world lieth in darkness, and that all the riches, and honours, and pleasures it can possibly bestow on its deluded votaries, are not worthy to be compared with one moment's enjoyment of that unspeakable glory which God has prepared for them that unfeignedly love him and keep his commandments.

The dignity of human nature, even in this state of humiliation and penance, is so obvious to any attentive mind, that the very heathens discovered it by the light of nature; many of them talk justly and magnificently of our original grandeur and primitive perfection, before we fell into this state of mortality and sorrow, and of our glorious restitution to our primitive felicity. This they spoke of, not only as a traditional truth derived from the father of the new world through all the branches of his family, but as an inward sentiment of nature, interwoven with our very frame, and essential to our being, of which we find many memorable testimonies among the writers of the *pythagoric* and *platonick* schools, all attesting this great, but melancholy, truth, that we are a race of sinful miserable creatures, fallen from our original glory into a state of imperfection and mortality; that we are not now what we once were, what the great author of our being intended us to be, and what we shall be hereafter. This view of our condition has been, in all ages, a reason for think-
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ing and serious people to consider what was that perfection, what the original felicity of our nature, how we came to lose it, what was the original of evil, and of all the calamities that have ever since overspread the face of the earth, and detained the whole human species under the bondage of misery and death, whether there were any possibility of a restoration, and what the most probable means to effect it. All agreed in this, that it was the loss of some inward treasure, some spiritual and rational perfections, which could only be recovered by mortifying the animal life in us, which is the death of the inward and spiritual, by pressing through the slavery and darkness of corrupt nature, into the supreme center of life, light, and glory; conscious, at the same time, that, under the present ruins of innocence and happiness, under the veil of this corruptible mortal body, there lay concealed a glorious and excellent nature, an immortal spirit, sighing for deliverance, and longing for redemption from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; that to this glorious and immortal spirit there belonged a glorious and immortal body, which they called *the connatural, the luciform, the immaterial body the subtle vehicle or chariot of the soul*; expressions frequently to be met with in *Hierocles*, and other *pythagoric* and *platonick* writers, agreeable to what *St. Paul* calls the spiritual body, 1 Cor. xv. 44. That this glorious body, with its glorious consort the soul, which, in scripture language, constitute *the inward man*, were confined in this prison of flesh and blood, from which it had no possible means of escaping but by weakening and mortifying our natural appetites and bodily lusts, which
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are the chains by which we are detained in this prison of corruption and death; that every indulgence of the animal life was prolonging our captivity, strengthening our chains, sinking us deeper into the mire, putting us into the inner prison, and putting our feet so fast in the stocks, as to render our escape difficult, if not impossible: It was taking off, or clogging at least, the wheels of the heavenly charriot, and clipping the wings of its divine inhabitant, so as to retard, if not entirely to obstruct her return to her heavenly country. Hence proceed the many noble and affecting exhortations to the exercise of all the moral virtues, and encouragements to all the disciples of wisdom, to persevere in this glorious warfare, to subdue their bodies by abstinence and mortification, to purify their souls by a contempt of riches, pleasures, and all the vanities of life, and *fleshy lusts, which war against the soul*; to abstain from every instance of impurity and uncleanness, as a disgrace to the dignity of our nature, and an affront and dishonour to him that made us.

But as the best and wisest of the heathen moralists found by sad experience, their utter inability to perform this mighty task, to complete this mighty deliverance from the captivity of sin and death, they all agreed in the necessity of begging and depending on the assistance of some superior power, whose divine influence and mediation they felt and acknowledged, and called by different names, without knowing what or whence it was. *Aristotle* calls it *intellectus agens*, by which he meant nothing more than a certain, created, intelligent being, or nature, substituted by God to illuminate the human soul, to excite actual attention in it, and communicate to

it those common intellectual principles which generally obtain in all men, and that stood in the same relation to the human soul, as the visible sun with its light and influence does to the vital nature in this lower world. But the best philosopher believed it to be the voice and power of God in the soul, exciting in it good thoughts and holy desires, and assisting us by his special grace, to conquer our natural corruption, and return to our primitive perfection; of which I could produce numberless instances from the *platonick* writers. There is a noble and remarkable passage to this purpose, in one of *Seneca's* epistles*. *There is* (says he) *an holy spirit in every one of us, the preserver and judge of good and bad, who behaves towards us, just as we do towards him.*

The assertion of *Arates*, quoted by *St. Paul*, *Acts* xvii. 28. That we are the offspring of God, was the concurrent sense of the best poets and philosophers in all ages of the world, though not expressed in direct terms, but strongly implied in equipotent expressions, all confessing and adoring an universal omnipotent spirit, the overflowing fountain of life, pervading, upholding, and filling all things in whom we live, and move, and have our being. Him, whom the *Athenians* ignorantly worshipped under the title of the unknown God, the Apostle declares to be the most high God, who made the world and all things therein, who giveth to all life and breath and all things, in whose image our first parent was created, and is there-

* *Sacer inest in nobis spiritus, bonorum malorumque custos & observator, & quemadmodum nos illum tractamus, ita & ille nos.*

fore called *the son of God*, Luke iii. 38. *The created image of the ever-blessed trinity*, endued with all perfections necessary for his exalted rank in the scale of being, which was to be *Supreme lord and governor of this sublunary world*.

For the better understanding our real and proper perfection, let us try if we can strike out any light, either from reason or revelation, into the original, present, and future state of human nature. In the first inquiry, reason can give us no assistance; and the light we receive from revelation, is feeble and obscure. We are assured, that we were created in the image of God; but the precise signification and extent of that image is no where directly specified. All that we can learn about it is from the analogy of faith, comparing several predictions and prophetic symbols; and what the scriptures declare concerning our redemption and future glory, which must be the same which we lost by the first *Adam*, and shall recover in the second.

As to our present state, it is a state of discord, contention, and opposition, betwixt good and evil, light and darkness, the flesh and the spirit. The good find themselves powerfully excited and assisted in the operations of this holy warfare, by an omnipotent loving spirit, who manifests himself by ineffable impressions of light and power upon the pure in heart; upon which account they are called in scripture *the children of God*, Rom. viii. 16. *Heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ*, Rom. viii. 17. *Partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. *Guided by the spirit of God*, Rom. viii. 14. *Having the guardanship of angels appointed to minister to the heirs of salvation*, Heb. i. 14. And their very bodies are called *the temples of the holy ghost*, 1 Cor. iii. 16.

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and members of Christ, 1 Cor. vi. 15. That under this dark veil of flesh and blood, there lies concealed a glorious and heavenly body the connatural vehicle of the soul, St. Paul confesses, 2 Cor. v. and calls it *our house which is from Heaven*, ver. 2. which he opposes to *our earthly house of this tabernacle* or corruptible body, ver. 1. and expresses his *groaning and earnest desire* at least, if not his hope, that he should *not be unclothed*, or put off this mortal body by death, but have it absorbed into his heavenly luciform body, as *Enoch and Elijah* had, *that mortality might be swallowed up of life*, ver. 4. The state of the wicked in this world (till they be shut up in final impenitence) is a state of discipline, probation, and hope; the good spirit of God strives with them, encourages them by mercies, terrifies them by punishments, alarms them by checks of conscience, invites with the hopes of everlasting happiness and unspeakable glory, and threatens them with endless and unspeakable torments. And as no man is so absolutely wicked, as to extinguish all sense of good and evil, and to renounce all appearances of virtue, which, to the most corrupt minds, will ever appear amiable; hence they substitute, the external forms and appearances of virtue, in the room of solid and substantial righteousness, which has given occasion to corrupt and partial observers of human nature, such as *Epicurus, Hobbes, Rochefoucault, Mandeville*, and other writers of the same class, to resolve all virtue into affectation, vanity, and self-love, which it must be confessed is the true ground of that counterfeit humility and charity, which, in the fashionable world, passes under the name of politeness and good-breeding. The true pattern of solid virtue, and
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standard of perfection, is the life of the blessed Jesus, who came down from Heaven to instruct us in every branch of our duty, to teach us the dignity and worth of the human souls, one of which he declares to be of more value than the whole world, and for which nothing less than the inestimable price of his most precious blood could be a sufficient ransom. He taught us, by his precepts and example, that *true greatness of mind* consisted in a contempt of the world, in renouncing all the riches, honours, and pleasures of this mortal life, in overcoming all the temptations of luxury, vanity, and pride, to which our several states and conditions of life may expose us; and that our real happiness is not to be found in this world, but only in that which is to come.

As to our future state St. John tells us in general, 1 John iii. 2. *That we are now the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when Christ shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; which, without correspondent faculties, we cannot do.* So then, if we be partakers of his spirit here, we shall be partakers of his glory hereafter; if he has, by the mighty operation of his grace, purified our souls from dead works, *he shall also change our vile body, that it may be like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.* The form and splendor of our lord's glorious body are very fully and distinctly described by the evangelist St. John, to whom he appeared in the isle of Patmos, Rev. i. 13, 14, 15, 16. *He was cleathed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle, his head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were*

as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters, and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. In comparison of this, how faint and feeble are all the expressions, how contemptible are all the forms of worldly glory. The magnificence of an eastern monarch is no more than childrens play, when compared with the glory that shall be revealed in every true member of Christ Jesus. Can any hope, any interest, any glory, be equal to this? and can those men have any pretensions to *Honour and true Greatness of Mind*, who renounce this high and heavenly calling? who reject the offer of immortal life and glory, and endeavour to persuade themselves and others, that they have in them no principle or hope of immortality, but are only dropped into the world by chance, to live and die like the beasts that perish. These gentlemen ought to be regarded, by every sincere christian and lover of virtue, not only as enemies to the cross of Christ, but as traitors to their own species, and enemies of human nature, as they endeavour to deprive us of that glorious hope, which alone can support us under the manifold distresses of this mortal life. And it is worth observing, that while the good christian patiently submits to the anguish of pain, the confinement of a sick bed, the infirmities of old age, and the agonies of death, in the hope of a glorious resurrection to immortal life, these men who have renounced this high and heavenly consolation, when they fall into the common calamities of life, sink under them into dejection and despair, and fly to an opiate, or a pistol, to put an end to a miserable life. The true christian, conscious of his heavenly

heavenly original, supported by a hope full of immortality, presses on boldly and steadily in the path that leads to eternal life, and scorns to do any thing that may disgrace the dignity of his heavenly profession; and is afraid of nothing but the displeasure of his God. He scorns to prostitute the exalted faculties of his heaven-born soul to the servile drudgery of ambition and covetousness; or pollute his body, which is the temple of God, and designed for eternal glory, by lust and intemperance. He considers all mankind as his brethren, and fellow-heirs of the same promises, whom he thinks himself obliged to assist and comfort, under all the difficulties and distresses of this mortal life; and is therefore ever ready to do good and to communicate, without hypocrisy, or partiality, or respect of persons; and he finds already the earnest of his future reward, the seal of his redemption, even the peace of God which passeth all understanding. This---this is *true Honour*, which the princes of this world can neither give, nor take away. This is the *Honour* that cometh from God only; and **SUCH HONOUR HAVE ALL HIS SAINTS.**

LETTER IX.

ALL the offices of piety and devotion towards God, as well as of justice and charity to our fellow-creatures, are bound upon us, by the sober dictates of nature, reason, and common sense. The *former*, I hope, I have sufficiently shewn, in the course of these letters; and it would
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be as easy to shew what particular kinds of behaviour may be reasonably expected from *Men of Honour, and true Greatness of Mind*, in the several different branches and articles of social life; but I shall confine myself to one or two instances only.

There is a sort of complexional tenderness and affection for our species interwoven in our very nature, which is finely expressed by a word peculiar to our language, which is *humanity*. This is that which involuntarily melts and softens the most savage hearts at the sight of a miserable object. This makes us naturally mourn with them that mourn, and grieve for the miseries of those whom it is not in our power to relieve: And when we see a man so hard-hearted, so void of all pity, so lost to all sense of compassion, as not to assist the miserable and afflicted, and do the best he can to relieve them, we justly call him an *inhuman brutish creature*. But, as this natural tenderness is in all men, more or less, and in some entirely weakened and destroyed, by the corruption of their hearts, the violence of their passions, the base treachery and insatiable avarice of self-love; therefore men have been forced to patch up and improve the ruins of it, by certain artificial methods of education, which we call *good-manners* and *good breeding*; by which the language and forms of humanity are in some measure preserved, without any correspondent sympathy in the inward man. Hence proceed the affected sigh, the awkward smile, the lying tear, the ceremonious compliment, the insincere promise, the merry mourning, and all the various forms and shapes of hypocrisy, which pass current through the polite world, under the venerable names of *good-nature* and *good-manners*;
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from whence (as I have already observed) the partial and corrupt observers of human nature have taken occasion to resolve all the appearances of humanity and benevolence among mankind into policy, affectation, or self-love: But let these enemies of human nature declaim and reason as loudly and perversely as they please, sure I am, there is such a principle as *generosity* and *benevolence*, the original growth of human nature, implanted in us by the great author of our being, which is incomparable from great and worthy minds; which, however may be checked and buried under the corrupt passions and inclinations of degenerate nature; yet has still some force, even in the worst of tempers, and is an invincible bias and direction in the best. Let us but observe the involuntary (I had almost said, mechanical) emotions of compassion that arise in the hearts of all men, who are not quite abandoned, at the sight of an unhappy object in distress; and the God-like pleasure that arises from our successful endeavours to relieve them, and get them removed into a happier situation: This is an unanswerable proof that there is, even in these ruins of human nature, such a virtue as a *disinterested benevolence*; and that this is not an artificial, but a natural state of soul, appears plainly from hence, that we see even children, and people of weak understandings, who are not capable of abstracted reflections, who are most thoughtless of their own condition, and incapable of entering into the prospects of futurity, have the most tender and affecting sentiments of compassion. But when we proceed further, and reflect upon the divine satisfaction that arises in a generous heart, from the consciousness of having done

a good-natured, compassionate thing, to a person in distress, of having relieved his sorrows, and comforted an afflicted soul, it can proceed from nothing but a consciousness of having acted agreeably to the dignity of our nature, something worthy of a great and generous soul.

This is saying a great deal ; but this is not all. It is possible that all this may be done by the mere strength of good nature, but especially if joined with good sense, and improved by wise and strong reflection ; but there is yet behind *one point of honour, one instance of a great and noble soul*, which mere nature, unassisted by the grace of God, can never attain to ; and that is, after the command and example of our blessed master, *to forgive injuries, to love our enemies, to bless them that hate us, to pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us*. This is a hard lesson to corrupt flesh and blood, and appears as absurd and unreasonable to unmortified reason, as to be in love with sickness and poverty, or to pray for pestilence and famine. But, that even this is a duty, though not discoverable by corrupt reason, nor agreeable to our corrupt passions, not only bound upon us by the obligations of religion, but perfectly agreeable to the supreme truth and nature of things, I shall endeavour to make appear from these two considerations :

1. That an unforgiving revengeful temper can only proceed from a littleness and weakness of mind, and a narrow understanding.

2. That, by plain consequence, a forgiveness of injuries, and a placable and merciful disposition towards those that commit them, is an infallible mark of a great mind, animated by noble sentiments, and just views of the real state and ultimate issue of things.

Infirmit

Infirmi est animi exiguiq; voluptas

Ultio,---was the observation of a wise heathen; and whatever opinion the military gentlemen (who, in all ages and nations are much the same,) might have, of the lawfulness and expediency of revenge, the wiser and better part of the heathen world, the moralists and philosophers were universally agreed to condemn it as ungenerous and unmanly. If we duly consider the real ground and foundation of most of the enmities and disputes which divide and disturb mankind, (I mean private persons) we generally find, they arise from such trifles as a wise man would be ashamed to own. All the great articles of human property are happily secured to every good man by the laws of his country, and all controversies upon these accounts are easily reducible to a just and equitable decision; but the things which break the friendships, interrupt the peace, and trouble the repose of mankind, are generally of another nature; such as little competitions for interest, or emulations for fame, honour, and precedency; a wry look, a contemptuous expression, a disrespectful behaviour, or even the mistaken appearance of either, which a wise man would have despised and pitied, has too often produced bloody and tragical consequences. Now, how is it possible that such trifles should discompose a reasonable mind, force it from its situation, and precipitate the angry soul into a state of fury and distraction! How comes it to pass that such trifles, as have no real connection with our happiness, no existence but in our distempered imaginations, should have so much power over us, as to disarm our reason, baffle all our philosophy, and drive us to such degrees of madness as may entail
 sorrow

sorrow upon our last moments, and casts us into endless misery ! Why, it proceeds only from a shameful weakness of mind, a defect of reason, and a criminal indulgence of fancy, imagination, and passion. This may help to explain a common observation: *That cowards are most prone to revenge.* A man of a *little mind*, who has been guilty of *mean and dishonourable practices*, judges of other men by himself, and measures every man's sentiments by his own, and therefore cannot expect that another should forgive him, what he knows he could not forgive in another ; and is therefore under continual apprehensions of suffering what he knows he has deserved, and can never think himself secure till he can find an opportunity of finishing his malice by some unsuspected treachery in an unguarded hour. So true is that saying, *that cowards have been known to fight, and sometimes to conquer, but were never known to forgive* : which gave occasion for the *Spanish* proverb, agreeable to the genius of that proud, cowardly, vindictive nation, *forgive me the injuries you have done me.*

Forgiveness of injuries, therefore, and a merciful disposition towards those that have injured us, is an infallible mark of a great and noble mind, and is our indispensable duty, 1. *As reasonable creatures* ; but more so, 2. *As christians.*

As reasonable creatures, we should seriously consider the real ground of our complaints, the subject-matter of our contentions, the nature of those articles, in which we are capable of doing, or receiving injuries ; and these appear, at first sight, to be nothing more than the trifling appendages of this short precarious state of being ; little circumstances, arising from the present fantastical
state

state of things, in which the real and proper happiness of our nature is no way concerned; a state that will quickly have an end, and in the next stage of existence will appear as not worthy to be remembered by rational and immortal spirits, created for everlasting life and glory. Of these, if we would form a right judgment, we should judge of them as God judges. We should endeavour to view them in the same light as they appear to glorified saints and angels, the glorious host of heaven. To these blessed spirits, all our eager competitions, and fierce contentions for interest, or fame, riches, glory, crowns and scepters, kingdoms and empires, appear just as contemptible, though not so innocent, as the squabbles of children about play-things and baubles, or chickens about a worm or a barley-corn.---We should next consider the present state and condition of human nature, and the relation we stand in to our **MAKER**, and fellow-creatures. We are all the unhappy offspring of unhappy parents, a weak, unconstant, trifling, giddy generation, the children of vanity and corruption, though heirs to immortal life and glory. The best and wisest man amongst us has his peculiar foible, his particular infirmity, *the sin that easily besets him*, his unguarded hour, his forgetful moment, exposed to numberless temptations, and never secure from falling. Think, now, what degrees of charity, compassion, and christian forbearance every man ought to shew to his offending brother. Should God be extreme to mark what the very best of us has done amiss, what flesh could be saved! and should all mankind agree in the rigorous demands of justice, what could be expected but universal confusion and desolation!

solation! now, what reason has any man to expect forgiveness either from God or man, who will shew none to those who have injured or offended him? can we reasonably hope to receive that we refuse to give? can we expect for ourselves what we deny to others? no, surely: it is therefore, our indispensable duty, as *reasonable creatures*, as freely to forgive, as we hope to be forgiven.

But the obligation is still much stronger upon us, as we are (or profess to be) *christians*. The blessed JESUS, whose disciples we profess to be, who is the sole fountain of light and life, truth and honour, and who best understood its true nature, has taught us, throughout his whole gospel, that the only true *Honour* of a christian is to resemble his father which is in heaven. This is the only *true greatness of mind* which ought to distinguish a true christian. It is on this account he commands and charges this duty of *forgiveness* upon us. And, that no man may plead ignorance or inability, in bar to this great and important duty, our blessed master has exemplified, in his own life, every action and branch of duty in which true *Christian Honour, and Greatness of Mind*, does consist. Every thing that the deluded world calls great and honourable, all the little advantages of birth and fortune, wealth and power, which are the idols of wrong heads, and corrupt hearts, he despised and rejected. He, who was *lord of lords, and king of kings, whom all the host of heaven worship, before whom all the princes and nations of the earth are but as the drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance*: he, who might, if he had pleased, have made his appearance in the world with all that pomp and magnificence which heaven and earth could

could furnish for our sakes, and, for our instruction and example, chose to make his entrance upon the stage of this life with all the types of humility, abjection and poverty; to be born of a poor virgin, in want of all the common necessities which even the poorest generally enjoy on such occasions; and the whole tenor of his life was agreeable to this beginning. Riches, honours, and pleasures, which are the supreme happiness of *little minds, and unsanctified hearts*, he absolutely renounced, and chose contempt and labour, reproaches and poverty for his portion, whilst *he went about doing good*, and healing all the bodily and spiritual infirmities of those who had faith to be healed; for all which he received no other recompence from his ungrateful countrymen, than to be treated as a malefactor, and to be put to the most painful and ignominious death: in which last scene of life he exhibited the most illustrious specimen of *true greatness of mind*, in the forgiveness of his murderers: *father (says he) forgive them, for they know not what they do!*

Judge now, how can ignorance and vice, intemperance and lewdness, violence and fraud, irreligion towards God, and injustice towards man, have the most remote pretension or relation to *true Honour*? can any little, trifling, vain, ungrateful creature be truly *honourable*? can any spark of *Honour* so much as glow in a proud, malicious, spiteful heart? can that man have any tolerable pretension to *true greatness of mind*, who is a slave to intemperance, lust, and folly? can any thing *truly honourable, great, and noble*, proceed from a sordid, sneaking, niggardly, penurious soul? we may, with as much reason, expect the soul of a brute, the spirit of a devil,

devil, and the perfections of an angel, to meet in the same person.

I know not any instance in modern story so applicable to this point, as that we find in the life of the famous *Gaston Marquis de Reny*. This illustrious nobleman was a soldier and a christian, and had a peculiar felicity in reconciling the seeming opposition between the two different characters. He had a command in the *French* army, and had the misfortune to receive a challenge from a person of distinction in the same service. The Marquis returned answer, by the person who brought the challenge, that he was ready to convince the gentleman that he was in the wrong, and, if he could not satisfy him, he was ready to ask his pardon. The other, not satisfied with this answer, insisted upon his meeting him with his sword; to which he sent this answer: *That he was resolved not to do it, since God and the king had forbidden it, otherwise he would have him know, that all the endeavours he had used to pacify him did not proceed from any fear of him, but of Almighty God, and his displeasure; that he should go every day about his usual business, and, if he did assault him, he would make him repent it.* The angry man, not able to provoke him to a duel, and meeting him one day by chance, drew his sword, and attacked him, who wounded and disarmed both him and his second, with the assistance of a servant that attended him; but then did this truly christian nobleman shew the difference betwixt a brutish and christian courage; for he led them to his tent, refreshed them with wine and cordials, caused their wounds to be dressed, and their swords to be restored to them, and dismissed them with christian and friendly advice, and was never heard to mention the affair

fair afterwards to his nearest friends. It was a usual saying of his, *that there was more true courage and generosity in bearing and forgiving an injury for the love of God, than in requiring it with another; in suffering, rather than revenging, because the thing was much more difficult: that bulls and bears had courage enough, but it was a brutish courage; whereas ours should be such as should become reasonable creatures and christians.*

I beg leave to conclude with this solemn declaration. In obedience to the commands, and imitation of the example of my blessed master, by whose merits and intercession I expect to receive the full and free remission of all my sins, I do freely and absolutely remit and forgive all injuries and wrongs, affronts and offences, that have at any time, by treachery or violence, by wrong heads, or malicious hearts, by false friends, or open enemies, been acted or intended against me; and pray God they may never be laid to their charge; and hope, by the grace of God, I shall ever be ready to return good for evil to the greatest enemy I have in the world.

THE END.

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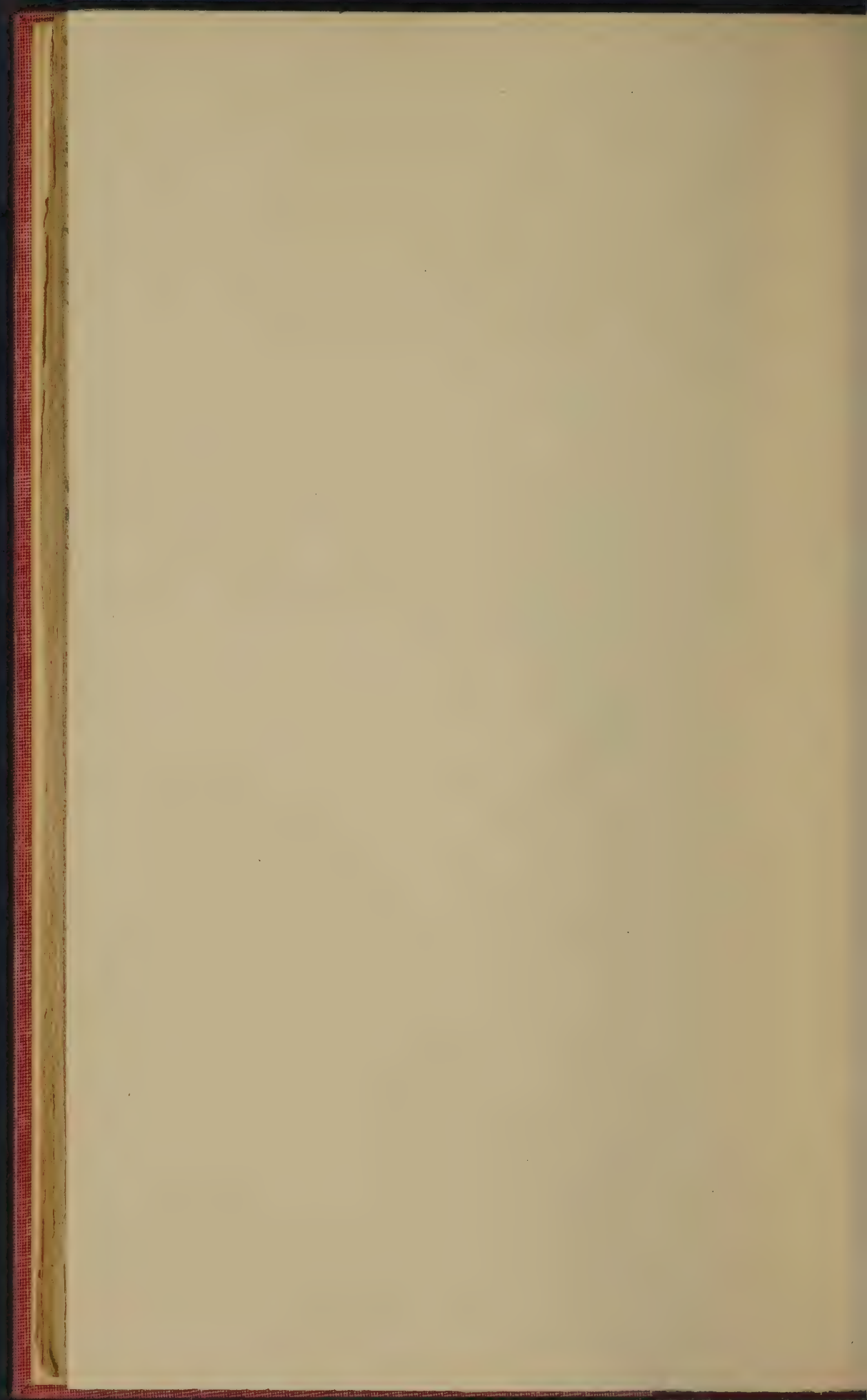
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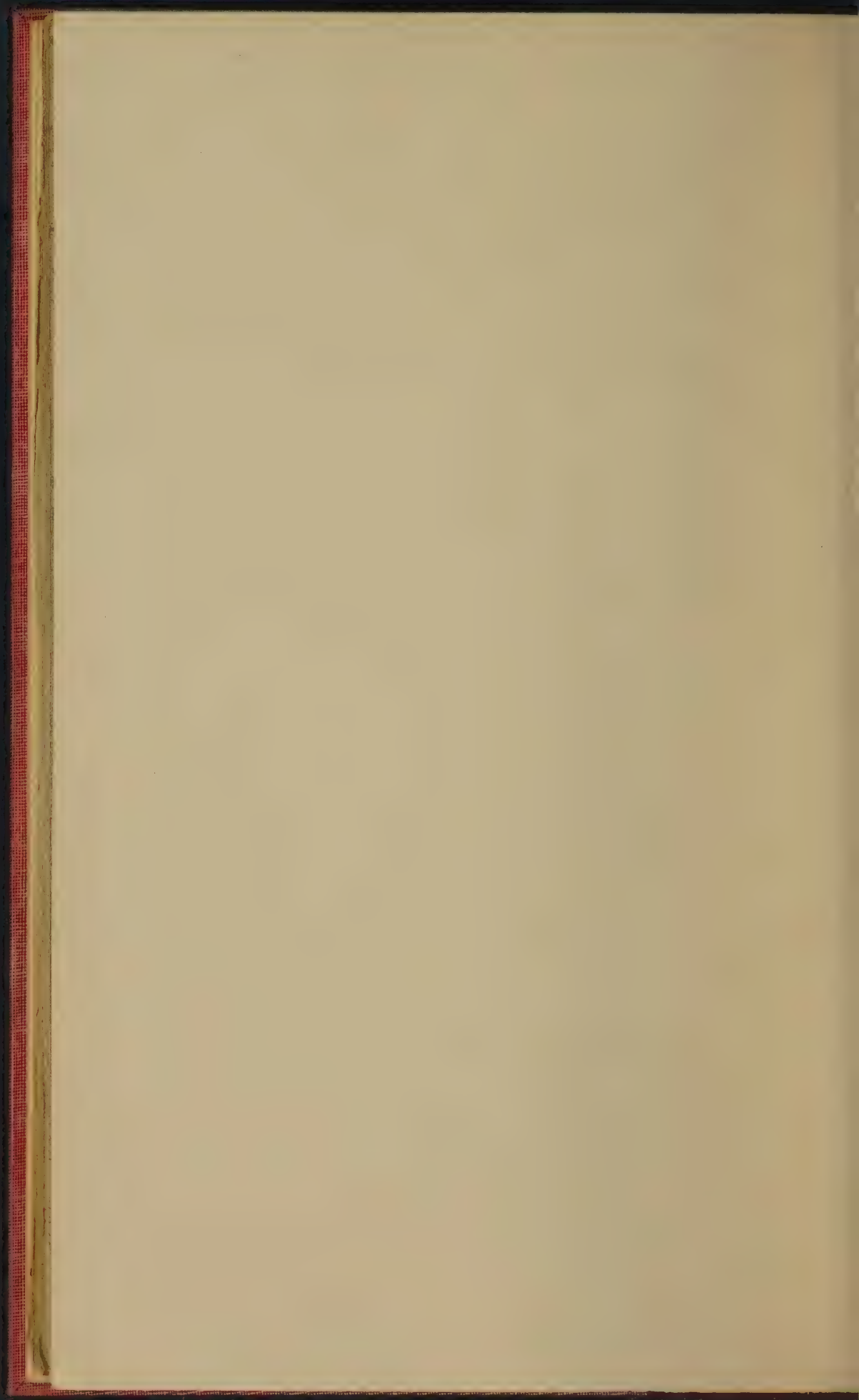
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